BALZAC

PÈRE GORIOT

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PÈRE GORIOT

BY

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

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INTRODUCTION

HONORÉ DE BALZAC was born at Tours on May 16, 1799. Thus, like Shakspeare, and like George Eliot—with whom, in a lesser degree, he has characters in common—he was born in the central plain of his native land. So much is worth noting as to place. And the date also is worth remembering. For it was not for nothing that Balzac was born so close upon the dawn of that Nineteenth Century which no one was to declare as he declared it, or so near the close of that Eighteenth Century whose ideals and aptitudes he resumed and projected into his own time as no contemporary did or was capable of doing. His father, whose age was fifty-three years when Honoré was born, had been an advocate, but was at that time civilian Commissary to the army of the North. He was a man of exceptional powers, physical and other, exceptional character, and exceptional originality—or at any rate, that potential originality which is commonly called a cast of mind. His daughter describes him as having in him much of Montaigne, of Rabelais, and of Uncle Toby: and he

knew his own powers so well that he refused—a little in the face of evidence, or at least of family opinion—to believe that his son could possibly be a fool. The world owes much, as we shall see, to this admirable man's good opinion of himself. The child Honoré was a very human child; the picture of health, playful, affectionate, and liking nothing so much as to get the blame, and take the punishment, for any faults into which his sister Laure, about two years younger than himself, had fallen. In Mr. Wedmore's little book on Balzac in the "Great Writers" series, a somewhat erroneous impression is given of what the little boy Honoré's ways were, by referring to his fourth or fifth year an anecdote which belongs to his fifteenth or sixteenth. But here is one which ought not to lie hidden in the French of Madame Surville. The child was taken by his father and mother on a visit to his grandparents, who lived in Paris. It needs not to be said that the old folk made much of the young hero, or that the young hero made himself master of the house and the household. He also made friendships; especially one with Mouche. On a certain day a magic lantern was had in, for his entertainment. Everybody attended, and the séance was about to begin, when Honoré, not seeing his friend Mouche among the spectators, rose and exclaimed, with the voice of authority, "Stop!" He left the drawing-room, and returned dragging his good friend with him, to whom he said: "You sit there, Mouche, and look on. It won't cost you anything—Grandpapa is paying!" This was in 1804, and Mouche was a big watch-dog. It is a pretty story of childhood; but it might be treated as a document by the critic who

is concerned with the individual psychology which begot the *Comédie Humaine*.

At the age of seven Honoré was sent to school —more precisely, to the Oratorian College at Vendôme—and there he began the cultivation of intelligence in a singular way, and to singular purpose. He had been fond of reading, and had read much, especially in the department of Fairy Tales; but he now began to take all knowledge to be his province, especially that region of it which has been called the Unknowable. The Oratorians had collected a very fine library, and Honoré entered into an alliance with the librarian. According to Theophile Gautier, this librarian was himself engaged upon a transcendental work; which accounts for much. At any rate, he was mathematical master as well as librarian, and thus was useful to Honoré in a double capacity: for he could connive at Honoré's neglect of lessons—in mathematics, at least—and could allow him to have all the books he wanted. Other lessons besides those in mathematics were neglected; but the boy read much, read everywhere, read everything. A great deal of this reading was done in secret, a great deal of it was done in the black-hole, guard-room, or whatever be the English equivalent of *cachot;* but always he read, and with a rapidity of eye and brain-action which—probably then, and certainly later—always took seven or eight lines at a single glance, and never needed to wait for the last word to gather in the whole meaning. This went on during seven years, and during that time his masters saw in him only a difficult boy, lazy, stupid, averse from study, and unimprovable by much punishment. In after days the great writer—in the first part of *Louis Lam-*

bert—built the literary cenotaph of the schoolboy Honoré Balzac, and showed the imaginative and dreamy spirit suffering, and barely suffering, the hated atmosphere of the schoolroom, with its noise and its noisomeness, its petty tasks and its petty task-masters—showed this with that power of evocation and that remorseless analysis of constituents which, in the present book, makes the reader unforgettably familiar with every aspect and every odour of the Maison Vauquer.

Let us tell in a word what was the upshot of this seven years' sojourn in Purgatory—Purgatory mitigated by the intellectual rapture of acquisition and by long outlooks into the Infinite. First, then, during that sojourn he wrote his famous *Treatise on the Will;* a treatise which one of the masters discovered and burnt.—"So this is the kind of rubbish you've been wasting your time on!" says he—but which Balzac never ceased to regret as a valuable lost work of his spirit. People will smile; but I have not the slightest doubt that it was admirable, and left the question where it found it. Secondly, came the end: his mother received a letter calling on her to come and take her son away, for he had fallen into a "kind of coma." She brought away a wasted and sorry specimen of boyhood, at the sight of whom his grandmother exclaimed against "those schools," as every grandmother should—whose divine business it is to foresee and war against infanticide in all its disguises save that of instant kindness. It seemed as if Honoré was not only an invalid, but an imbecile; for he had sunk into a condition not unlike somnambulance, seemed to notice little, and only by a heavy effort—and as though recalling his mind from a great distance—could he answer the simplest questions put to

him. These appearances were sufficiently alarming; but the wise Commissary prescribed much open air, much exercise, and not too much—nor yet too little—reading for some time to come; and Honoré was soon himself again. What had befallen him was, as he himself explains, "a congestion of ideas," a kind of cerebral surcharge—a delivery at headquarters, as his father might have said—too great and too rapid for arrangement, resulting in a state of body and mind that was half an intellectual energy or dream and half a stupor of the senses. But in the happy home days that now followed, while the young philosopher (like an obedient son) went a-field to fly his little brother's kite, or ran handicaps with his sisters—and especially while he took long walks all about that countryside of Touraine and those banks of the Loire which he never ceased to remember in his writings and to love in his heart—his mind grew serene, and his perceptions untroubled and clear, and all his jumbled accumulations of knowledge and impression and thought quietly fell into order, and remained at his command. For since he forgot nothing, since he had, as Gautier says, "all the memories"—the memory of words, of things, of occurrences, of place, of time, of colour, and even of his own subjective states, along the whole line of his reading, or his personal life—no knowledge which he had gained was ever time or labour lost to him.

I have given too much space, out of the little at my disposal, to this one incident of youth. But not unadvisedly; since the story makes way for a couple of remarks, the value of which will depend upon the reader's fitness to receive them. The first is this: that the author of the *Treatise*

on the Will not only wrote the Études Philosophiques—*Peau de Chagrin* and the rest—but was a very potent influence animating the whole mass of the Comédie Humaine in a sense not immediately obvious. The world has been told to weariness of the materialism of Balzac, the delight in things, the Auctioneer in Excelsis whom the best received critics find everywhere *furnishing* those books. Mr. Henry James has gone so far as to say—very neatly, it is true—that it is all furnishing; and that for Balzac even thoughts are a kind of things. I think that the criticism which dared to be a little more subtle might reverse this dictum and argue to good purpose that for Balzac things are a kind of thoughts. One smiles at first indeed, noticing how he will say "un équipage splendide"—'tis as though he had seen the Beatific Vision! Well, I submit that in a sense he had; that only an intense spiritualism could have held in suspension such a world of matter; that he remained all his life half a *voyant* even in material things (that he was a *voyant* in the things of the mind everyone confesses), and saw his "équipage splendide," and much else that was not splendid, in a kind of glory that was itself as metaphysical and "unreal"—as full of quick apprehension and wonder—as are other men's contemplations of entities, which are held to be different in kind and very much superior. In other words, things were thoughts for him *because* in his eyes they were more than half animate, because he saw them radiating significance and full of power. The "équipage splendide" was but a token, the visible point and materialisation of a whole world unseen. I leave the suggestion to be misunderstood by those who were born to mis-

understand it. The second remark is this—that it is always well to remember that Balzac, apart from genius altogether, had a mind more richly stored with various and profound knowledge than had any other writer of romance, perhaps any other dynamic *littérateur* that ever lived—and that the pretensions of Balzac the Omnivoyant and of Balzac the Omniscient, smile at them as we may, had an uncommonly deep and firm basis in Balzac the Omnivore and the Unforgetting.

How he continued his studies at Tours, and how he came (1814) with his family to live in Paris, and studied at the Sorbonne, need not detain us. It is worth remembering, perhaps, that he would come home and recite his glowing admirations of Cousin, Guizot, Villemain, to the listening family; a youthful fault of judgment in the future Realist for which he makes amends in an early page of *Père Goriot*.* Better worth recording is the fact that, even before the move to Paris, he had begun to say that the world should talk of him some day; and he quite good-humouredly bore all the consequences of such an avowal in a family circle in which he was not looked upon as a genius or even as reasonably clever. He had very strongly within him the desire and the presentiment of fame ("*le désir et l'intuition de la renommée*"), says his sister. But at that very time his mother was wont to meet his occasional brilliancies or profundities with the remark: "It is quite impossible, Honoré, that you can understand what you have just said!" And that might well be, also. Only, the good woman ought to have recognised that the gift and the godlikeness was in saying the thing, not in understanding

* Page 44 of this translation.

it, and that when the Seer has spoken, the burden and the duty of comprehending him is laid upon the world. The infant Balzac, like other prophets and poets, doubtless said many things of which he did not trouble to measure the full range. Howbeit, the infant would not argue with his mother, but smiled in a dazzling and dreamy way.

In deference to a theory of his father's, who regarded the history and the legislative systems of all lands as an essential branch of a liberal education, he attended his law classes, and went through the necessary office discipline for three years. But when his studies were ended, and he was expected and urged to decide for the legal profession, then Honoré addressed the whole family. It was a severe crisis in the history of that family; it was a fateful moment in the history of literature. "He aspired to literary glory!" There was a moment of stupefaction. Then—"an animated discussion followed. Honoré combatted so eloquently the powerful reasons and inducements set before him, and his looks, his words, and every tone of his voice, revealed such a vocation to that career, that my father agreed that he should have two years in which to try what he could do." The father had theories of his own, and one of them assured him that a boy of his begetting could not be a fool*—and if Honoré, making these claims, was not a fool, then he must be something even more unexpected in that house. The good mother had less philosophy, but she had, in its place, a disastrous deal of forethought. Having to acquiesce

* Remember, he "had much of Uncle Toby," etc. And when French writers refer thus to Uncle Toby, they usually mean Tristram Shandy; in this case, perhaps, Tristram Shandy's father.

in the wild paternal decision, she arranged to plant her son in Paris on such a footing that he need not die of hunger, indeed, but should be in no delusion as to the discomfort and privations that attend the literary life. The Balzacs were living at this time about six leagues out from Paris, but the wise mother came up herself and installed her son in his famous garret—with the bed and the table and the few chairs, and the rain coming through the roof—in the Rue Lesdiguières, No. 9. The situation, it is worth remarking, was chosen because of its nearness to the only public library in Paris which Honoré had not already explored. A superannuated servant of the family—an old woman of seventy, who is called in the home letters *Iris the Messenger*—was told off to look after him. That is to say, she would look in daily: and he knew his allowance. Then the mother went home, and gave out a report that Honoré had gone away on a long visit to a relation in the Provinces. This, in order that an honourable retreat might remain open to him, and that he might be free to fail in literature and yet not feel that he was shamed before the world..

The record of those days in the Rue Lesdiguières is contained in his letters to Laure, always his confidante and his supporter in the midst of a doubting world. Those letters run the whole gamut of brotherly affection and playfulness, they laugh in every key of the French instrument, including that *Langue balzacienne* with which he has already begun to enrich his mother-tongue. But through it all, one sees the misery in which he lived, the privation, the loneliness—and yet in another instant it is that merry preoccupation with splendid things! that bravado

of impossible promises! those dreams of success, of arrival, of Balzacian renown, of which he speaks with an indissoluble blending of solemnity and amusement! For the rest, he must have "le *Tacite* de mon père"—repeatedly he asks her to send his father's Tacitus—it is an edition not to be found in the great Library—and when it comes we read, "j'ai fait cette nuit un rêve délicieux; je lisais Tacite que tu m'avais envoyé! . ." But with the Tacitus he had asked her to send a blanket or quilt to throw across the foot of his bed; and if she can cast into the bundle *quelque vieillissime châle*, it would be so useful. He has already a *carrick tourangeau* (evidently a Scotch rug woven in his own countryside), but he has to think first of his freezing feet and legs as he sits working o'nights, so near the sky: so his poor body has to bear the weather. But if he had only that oldest old shawl—and a *calotte dantesque*, which the north wind would not blow away. . . . then, "j'habiterai fort agréablement mon palais!" One sees the picture. He has great difficulties with his servant; not *Iris the Messenger*, whom he was too kind-hearted to make a drudge of, but Moi-même. This wretched Moi-même does everything for him, does it grudgingly, does it badly, often doesn't do it at all. He allows the cobwebs to accumulate, and whole flocks of fuzz to parade the dusty floor, he has spilt so much coffee on the boards that all the rain that comes through the roof will never remove the stains—and who is to carry water in sufficient quantities from the street to this height? And Moi-même only goes to market once in three or four days, so his master is half-starved. And as he grudges his steps, he goes to the nearest shops and pays the dearest

prices, so his master is impoverished. It is inexhaustibly gay, and the dialogue between master and servant—they were both in their twentieth year, and geniuses—is spirited enough: but it is possible not to smile. Be it remembered that this life was unmitigated by any intercourse with the world. When he went out in the day, he had to go by unfrequented streets, to avoid meeting any old acquaintances. Once he goes to see Talma play *Cinna;* but he must hide himself in a latticed box—and his stomach quakes in advance at the prospect of paying for that extravagance. But he must see Talma; for was he not himself writing a tragedy? After breaking ground, or turning over thought, in several projects, he has decided upon Cromwell as the subject of his masterpiece. And as he settles down to the task of achieving it, his exhilaration grows more intense, and yet his tone is graver. Ideas come to him, he has a sense of expansion. "The desire and the intuition of renown"—if one may give an English spelling rather than a translation of a phrase essentially French—is with him more than ever, one feels. He takes his walks now in Père-Lachaise—"the Jardin des Plantes is too melancholy"—studying the parts of his tragedy in which most seriousness and simplicity are required. And walking there, a thought occurs to him. "Without doubt there are no such splendid epitaphs as these: LA FONTAINE; MASSÉNA; MOLIÈRE—a single word which says everything and sets you dreaming!"

His dear tragedy finished, he went home to read it, and so achieve the great vindication of his claims. The whole family was in presence, and a few intimates who were in the secret; especially there was one man whom Honoré had

passionately vowed to "give the lie to"—apparently the man who had wanted to have him made some kind of copying clerk or bagman because *he wrote a good hand!* The young dramatist read with fervour. But his fervour cooled and grew cold, and finally froze away to zero under the influence of an audience all sitting so near, and all dead silent. In a word, the masterpiece was condemned; gently by the family, with explicitness by the hated foeman. The author protested, challenged this verdict, asked to have his work submitted to expert judgment. M. Surville, his future brother-in-law, suggested that a certain "*doyen littéraire*," a past Professor of the Ecole Polytechnique, might be invited to decide the question. The old gentleman read the MS. with great care, and decided —that the author of this might do whatever else he liked, but ought to leave literature alone! It was a killing blow, and Honoré, says his sister, received it with bare breast. But he did not own himself vanquished: "I have not the gift for tragedy, that is all," he said; and took up his pen again.

But not in his garret. After sixteen months of the Rue Lesdiguières he was in need of nourishment and nursing; so his mother would have him under the family roof again, and within the sphere of her own ministrations and care. Then began his second apprenticeship to Letters, which may be said to have lasted ten years. During the first five he produced more than forty volumes, all published under a variety of pseudonyms, and none of them regarded by himself, then or later, as having any literary worth whatever. "They are as bad as the devil," he says, "and not nearly so taking." Yet it is certain that

each of them represents the best he can do just then, working at the rate he practises. For he works like a slave, and with the feeling of a creature imprisoned. He is working for freedom, indeed, for the independence that is denied him, for the vindication of his powers. "I can neither think nor work," he cries, "but must still drive on writing and writing every day. . . Writing novels to win me freedom, and *such* novels! Ah Laure, what a collapse for my dreams of glory!" Laure is by this time Madame Surville, so the household has lost the one member whose support and belief in him he could always be sure of. He is ever dreading the reappearance of projects for getting him a situation. One of the family friends who was most active in that kind of advice has gone to his account, but the other is still alive and terrible. "If they clap that extinguisher on me," says Honoré, "I am a dead man!" So he writes these novels for the money that they bring—"the thousands and thousands of francs," as he says in a gay moment. All told, the thousands and thousands of francs still left him dependent, and the quality of the work brought him no nearer to fame. Meanwhile his youth is going by, and he will not have tasted the fruits of that season. It is a very sad letter, that in which he cries: "Laure, Laure, mes deux seuls et immenses désirs, *être célèbre* et *être aimé*, seront-ils jamais satisfaits? . . ." They were to be satisfied, we shall see, and he died of them.

But those 'prentice-pieces of his, though they never bore his name, nor were individually acknowledged by him, were not so worthless. Not so worthless from the critical point of view, says Professor Saintsbury, the one man in our country who is known to have read them: and cer-

tainly not worthless as training for the future novelist. They taught him how to describe character and how to describe scenery, he himself says. But perhaps they did still more for him by establishing—upon a physiological basis, and while his brain was still amenable to training—the possibility of that rate of going, that habitual activity, that capacity for continuous, unfatigued cerebration, without which his greater works could never have been brought to birth. This high rate of going, this headlong catabolism, this explosive consumption of brain-fuel, is the very life and re-birth of a genius—that is to say, a genetic nature—though its semblance in lesser men is mere damnation and dreariness. Nay, though Balzac despised his early works remorselessly, he felt surely enough, at times, what they were doing for him. In a letter to his sister, sending her two new books—"*encore fort mauvais et fort peu littéraires surtout!*" he says: "My ideas are changing at such a rate that my power and execution must soon be changing also. Wait a little, and you will be finding as much difference between the Me of to-day and the Me of to-morrow as there is between the youth of twenty and the man of thirty."

That momentary flush of confidence must have died down when he decided to return to Paris in 1823. He still wrote, to be sure; but the rewards of his toil were so meagre that he was fain to listen to a friend who advised him to try to better his fortunes by a happy business venture (*une bonne spéculation!*). Now, to the mind of Balzac—thinker, dreamer, realist, born man-of-affairs, and an artist craving for "*une vie splendide!*"—the idea of *une bonne spécula-*

tion had always the same guileless fascination that the idea of *une bonne fortune* had for his contemporary Alexandre Dumas. With capital furnished by the aforesaid friend and evil counsellor, Balzac set up as a publisher, and produced one-volume editions of Lafontaine and Molière. A one-volume edition was an innovation, and he was a new-comer, so the trade was against him; and he had not money to spend on the advertisements which would have brought the public to the rescue. At the end of a year he had not sold twenty copies; there was office rent running on; and he was glad, in fine, to sell the whole stock for what it would bring as waste-paper. The result of the enterprise, then, was a heavy debt. The friend wished to see his money back, so he got Balzac started off on *bonne spéculation* No. 2; a printing business this time ("books always attracted him," observes his sister). The initial expenses of this business were very great (fifteen thousand francs for license alone, to say nothing of buying plant, etc.), and for want of working capital the fabric began to totter. By way of buttress, a type-foundry was added to the unfinanced system of things; but this did not increase the working capital either—and the collapse came. He had assured his family, in vain, that if they would help him to hold out for an hour or two longer, the thing was going to prosper. And it proved so: for the friend to whom he sold the business for a mere nothing, in order to avoid the disgrace of bankruptcy, made a fortune out of it. For Balzac, he was—as M. Zola poignantly phrases it—*sur le pavé:* he stood in the streets of Paris with nothing in the world but a mountain of personal debt and, to pay it with, the least illustrious pen in France!

That was in 1828. There was none so poor as do him reverence then—he was without pence, without position in the public eye, was a weary disappointment to his family, was marked by his friends as a chronic incapable—yet in that year he finished and bravely put his name to the *Chouans*, not his greatest book by any means, but the first visible stone at least of the greatest literary monument of his epoch.

From this hour may be said to date Balzac's entry into the life of his time, and the great story of his works and his debts now becomes a part of literary history. The works and the debts, if they were not the man, were at least the life that he lived, and apart from these—and from the realisation of the second of his "two immense desires"—there is very little material to hand of the kind that biographies are made of. And what there is, is a bewilderment of indication and anecdote, not always, nor often, admitting of verification or reference to time and place, when and where. He lived for nearly twenty years a hard-working, a hurried, a locomotive, and in some sense fugitive description of life, which must have been intensely interesting to himself, but which leaves little for his biographers to tell, and a great deal for the speculative to imagine. His life from this time was a great battle for independence and for fame; and although the victory was virtually his, by prowess and by merit, in the first hours of the fight, yet the wreath was withheld for fifteen years by stupidity and hatred, and was only surrendered at last on the tomb of the hero.

And that same entry into literature, to be sure, was marked by no particular portent. The *Chouans* (published in four volumes in 1829) was

favourably received, and sold well, but there was nothing apparitional about it save one thing—it bore upon the title-page that name of Balzac which the author of forty volumes had respected too proudly to place it upon any previous work of his. But the measure of recognition accorded to this book—and most of all, I think, the inspiration and the peril of the honourable name Balzac, which had now been cast, for good or evil, before that lost dog of all nations, the Public, to be by the said animal insulted or revered, as the event should teach it manners—for this reason or that, or another one, there was a strengthening of the will, an efflorescence of ideas, an enlargement of the whole literary vitality of our acknowledged incapable in his thirtieth year. The tale of the avalanche of masterpieces that now followed cannot be told here. Nor were the works all, each and individually, masterpieces in the smaller, more technical sense; but each bore, in some form, its own mark of a master mind, and the bulk and variety of output—every page of it honest hard literary work, hard writing, hard thinking—was the declaration of an energy beyond that of the masters. Mr. Wedmore singles out *La Maison du Chat-qui-pelote* (1830) as being "the first of Balzac's works which attains to exquisiteness." A true judgment, no doubt, though the word "exquisiteness" looks like a frail thing in danger, thus suddenly set beside the demiurgic name of Balzac; and the suggestion—hardly intended, one thinks—that exquisiteness was the first quality he attained to, is a thing to smile at. But indeed, unless you are at great leisure, it is never worth while stopping to discuss any one book of Balzac's, unless upon its own account,

not his. For there is always so much more to learn about his variety and power that you must be moving on, or you will never know—other books which he wrote almost concurrently with the one you wot of, are, as you will find if you look, as wide as the world away from it, and as searching and true and autochthonous—original matter of the place, original matter of a man's mind. Thus almost to the same moment as the *Maison du Chat* belong *Le Curé de Tours* and *La Peau de Chagrin*, and a battalion of other works, less miraculous than the latter, it is true, but works which nobody but Balzac could have written. If one calls *La Peau de Chagrin* miraculous, it is not because the story is technically so much superior to this and that among the others, but because there is at play in its production a combination of qualities and powers—almost every quality and power possible to prose literature, indeed—that is almost without a parallel in any one book. Realism, symbolism, romance, character and passion and pathos, oriental extravagance of imagination and debauch, and domesticity chaste and shaded and simple as Dutchman ever painted—and a riot of curious knowledge, and great wealth of thought and, through it all, the master hand of Balzac at work upon a *story*. But you have not had time to wonder at the *Peau de Chagrin*—have not even had time to neglect to look at a score of other children of the same father, all nearly of an age—before there looms upon your regard, as part of one year's work, *Eugènie Grandet*, *Séraphita*, *Le Médecin de Campagne*. For the first of these, it is in a way the counterpart of *Père Goriot*, and represents a counterpassion to the one which fills this book—the pas-

sion of Greed instead of the passion of Sacrifice —but there is almost nothing to tell you of their common authorship save that unsleeping power of Balzac which is in all his works, and goes with him into all his worlds. And as to *Le Médecin de Campagne*, to which he gave prodigious labour of head and hand, and of which he said: "It is the Evangel in Action!"—*Le Médecin de Campagne* contains an exposition of the moral dynamics of the world—of the things that build up and the things that pull down—a mere glimmering of which might save half the chancelleries of Europe from their chronic insanity and teach all the State Departments how to do their work or get it done. But always it is a story, and is full of the large open air, full of energy and quiet, of beneficence and health; and full, in passages, of a very rare sense of beautiful things. But what need to talk of *Le Médecin de Campagne?*—See! there are things greater crowding behind it, and the following year (1834) counts *Père Goriot* and *La Recherche de l'Absolu* as mere items in a catalogue of work accomplished. And close behind these come others still, and so it went on for the next thirteen years of his life, when—after an interval during which he was robbed from Literature by another devotion—he died with undiminished powers, and with a grip of reality that was as strong and an imagination that was as subtle and as sure as ever.

But it is worth while pausing for a moment at that date, 1834—the year of *Père Goriot* and *La Recherche de l'Absolu*. Speaking of Balzac's literary position at that time, the time when he made Balzac's acquaintance, Gautier quotes a few of the titles, and adds—"enough, that is,

on which to have built five or six reputations." Yet it was in November, 1834, that the "Revue des Deux Mondes" contained that article by Ste.-Beuve which began somewhat in this manner: "It is time to include, since our gallery of literary portraits would be incomplete without it, some notice of the most prolific of all our present-day novelists, the novelist with the largest public, the one who, more than any other, is the novelist of the hour." Thus might a very polite and point-devise critic in our day enter upon a literary estimate of the irresistible historian of Barabbas. As an estimate of Balzac, the article is not worth examination, though I have considered it my duty to read it twice with great wonder; and it is always interesting, of course, as showing the limitations of a great critic, whose mind was at home in the presence of everything except Reality and the Miraculous. But that phrase about *le romancier le plus fécond* not only expressed Ste.-Beuve's view of Balzac, but supplied a host of people with a descriptive formula which rendered unnecessary that more explicit disparagement which would have demanded some exercise of some kind of intelligence. His true status was recognised by the best and tallest men among his *confrères*, and outside of France his fame was great and growing—already in 1833 he had foregathered with a group of intellectual Germans, who assured him that in a few years he would be the literary chief of Europe. And that kind prophecy proved true enough in a few, a very few years; for he had an almost unparalleled acceptation, an acceptation among all who cared greatly for Letters in every land, an acceptation amongst all who cared for matchless Reading in his own. But the lesser critics

found it more conspicuous and mechanical to be against him than with him, and a lawsuit which he fought and won in the interest of contributors against editors did him no good with that clan, and closed the "Revue des Deux Mondes" against him. And of course he was always *le plus fécond, etc.*, and might or might not be—"what is your opinion?"—a better author than Eugène Sue. He had a pleasant way of giving the lie to those little enemies—by going on and writing another book, and another, of a kind which they could never have anticipated. The snarlings became cries of hatred as his power became as inevitable as their own commonplaces; and always when they thought he had got to the bottom of his sack, he launched at their heads another masterpiece. At this rate, it presently became useless to refer to *le plus fécond, etc.*—that had to be taken for granted; and as the power also had to be acknowledged at last, nothing remained for one but to impugn his morality. And that charge was easily urged against a strong and truth-speaking genius, dramatically impartial, who saw life steadily and saw it entire. The topic is too great for the hustled last lines of this short paper. One may say, however, that if any writer is confessed in his own generation to have intellectual power—to have mental grasp and sympathy—and is at the same time exclaimed against as immoral, then it is almost certain that we have to do with a personality of the first rank and beneficence. one of the pioneer forces in the enlargement, the unfolding of our world. Only a very great nature, a very great writer, is ever thus immoral. It is true there are a certain deluded kind of smaller creatures who aspire to be *indecent*,*

* May I explain? It is impossible to be indecent: one can only be stupid.

but these do not come into the discussion. Monotony, in any case, has marked them for her own, and may be left to share the poor spoil with the occasional policeman.

But leaving that topic truncated and others untouched, and frankly neglecting to say the meagre insufficient word which one might have attempted in regard to the breadth of human action and circumstance, and the variety of human character and passion and experience, which the *Comédie Humaine* encloses, it is time to turn one glance of recognition upon that other element which made the atmosphere, the medium, of Balzac's life. Works and debts were the hydrogen and the oxygen of that ocean. Of the works, it has been possible to say little here; of the debts, no man knows the account. But Balzac began his career in 1828—*sur le pavé*—owing a hundred and twenty thousand francs, and for the next nine years floated on bills. He made money, and paid, but always the day of complete deliverance receded; for when he had paid all he could at any time, he had always to mortgage to-morrow's work for to-day's dinner. Thus he had contracts ahead with publishers, the story of which is a mere amazement. He drove himself like a galley slave, he worked eighteen hours a day, and sometimes more than eighteen; and with it all he was often in fear for his furniture, which he had bought and which he prized so dearly, and had often to betake himself to hiding-places that he might have peace to work and to pay. And it is true that an occasional *bonne spéculation*, in which the desire for gain was never the vital motive, helped to perpetuate the condition of impending ruin. But withal, he never thought of any meaner way of dealing

with the situation than the good way of work; more work and harder. He was one of the honestest men that ever lived; and perhaps the most honest of all artists. Whatever his difficulties, whatever his despairs, his work had to be always the best work that he could do, and the closeness of the intellectual texture never slackened even when the world seemed going to bits around him. The only modern writer who ranks near Shakspeare, he was "without the literary gift"—the words are Gautier's—but of Style also, if he had it not, he had at least "the desire and the intuition," and he laboured magnanimously towards that perfection. He expended on proof correcting and proof expanding alone the physical and mental labour of two men's lifetimes, and for that cause he must have sacrificed fortunes of ready money. To be sure he desired "une vie splendide." But for him the "vie splendide" meant only a home made gracious by rich books and objects of art and some masterpieces of painting. He built himself such a home at last, but only to die in it; and during most of his life, the masterpieces of painting were represented by chalk marks on the walls, which he would ask his visitors to contemplate with delight.

And that home was built to receive a Woman whom he worshipped. She was a Polish countess, and hers was one of the many friendships which his books had brought him. There were eleven years or more of this friendship, while her husband lived; and then there was an exaltation of that sentiment, and henceforth nothing but love to the end. But there were endless endless difficulties. He had all these debts to pay, and he had to make a home fit to bring her to; and she, a sub-

ject of the Tsar, and of noble rank, was not at liberty to marry "from one day to another." But the day came at last, and they were married in March, 1850. It was a mistake and it was very human—but if we consider carefully, it was a kind of treason too. Balzac had undergone an intense specialisation of function: he was, more than other men, the servant of Pallas Athene. That was a consecration, not to be broken without a curse. And it seems as though the Goddess, not without ominous warnings given, had indeed cursed him for that apostasy, that fall to the worship of her intolerable Rival, who had all the world's suffrages and service already. A few weeks after the marriage, began the long journey from Russia, that he might die, if death it was to be, in his own dear France. He passed away in the night of August 18; and two days later, Victor Hugo pronounced his funeral oration by the open grave. They were standing then on that topmost slope of Père-Lachaise, whence Rastignac had looked down upon Paris, tortuously couched along both banks of the Seine, whilst the lights of the city were waking one by one. And to-day there is a headstone there, bearing the one word BALZAC. . . A single word which says everything and sets you dreaming.

W. M.

PÈRE GORIOT

TO THE GREAT AND ILLUSTRIOUS GEOFFROY SAINT-HILAIRE

In admiration of his Works and his Genius
—De Balzac

MADAME VAUQUER (*née* de Conflans) is an old woman who for the past forty years has kept a boarding-house in Paris, situated in the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, and so lying between the Latin Quarter and the Faubourg Saint-Marcel. Though the house, known as the *Maison Vauquer*, receives male and female boarders, young and old alike, yet ill-will has never breathed a word against the respectability and good manners of this establishment. It is true, to be sure, that for now some thirty years no young woman had been known to live there; and if any young man makes it his resting-place, it is a token that his family is affording him a very slender allowance. Nevertheless, in 1819, the date at which this drama begins, the Maison Vauquer did count among its inmates one young girl in poor circumstances.

This *drama*, we have said: and though the word has been used and over-used in the too-lamentable literature of our time, and has been wrenched to so many purposes that it is fallen

into discredit at last, its employment may be permitted here. Not that even this story is dramatic in the narrower sense of the term; but that, when the end has been reached, it is likely that some tears will have been shed, *intra muros et extra*, tears of the eyes or tears of the heart.*

Beyond the confines of this city will anyone understand it? It is open to doubt. For the action of this book, and its setting, as they shall be unfolded to the reader's view, must needs be charged very full with particularity of touch, with instant observation, with the feeling and colour of the very scene; and I know not if there is any audience that will be sensitive to these effects, save that which is to be found between the slopes of Montmartre and the heights of Montrouge, in that illustrious vale where plaster for ever crumbles to its fall and the runnels run black with the mud of Paris. And yet again it is filled so full, this valley, with the realities of suffering and endurance; with joys, also, that are less happy than they seem; with an agitation of its life, at any rate, so perpetual and intense, that it needs I know not what exorbitance and emphasis of appeal to make any lasting impression upon the minds there. Not that there do not come into view, from time to time, individual tragedies which wear an aspect of solemnity and grandeur by reason of their association with the great virtues or the great vices of nature, tragedies in the presence of which egoism is hushed and selfishness stops for a moment to pity. Only, the moral impression is taken as though it were a luscious fruit: quickly

* A hazardous filling out of the sense in English; the translator makes the venture with a rope round his neck. These Latin words *may* mean "In Paris and in the world beyond it."

devoured and done with. The chariot of Civilisation, like the Idol-car of Juggernaut, is scarcely stayed for a moment by one heart, less easily broken than others, that hinders the circling of its wheel—this one also is quickly crushed and the Car proceeds upon its glorious way. Even so will you proceed, you who hold this book in your faultless white hand. You nestle yourself down among your cushions as you murmur, "Perhaps this will while away the time;" and when you have read the secret sorrows of Père Goriot to the end, you will go to dine with a good appetite. For your insensibility, you will hold the author to blame; taxing him with exaggeration, accusing him of poetic falsity to life. Ah, never think it! This drama is neither fiction nor romance. *All is true*—so true, that whoever wills, may find the elements of it in his own home, perhaps in his own heart.

The house we have spoken of, in which the business of a "Pension bourgeoise" or respectable boarding-house is carried on, is Madame Vauquer's own property and is still existent. It lies near the foot of the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, just where the ground slopes suddenly towards the Rue de l'Arbalète, and where consequently, owing to the steepness of the incline and the ruggedness of the causeway, vehicular traffic is very rarely seen either ascending or descending. This circumstance makes more marked at this point that stillness which reigns in all the streets that are packed away between the Val-de-Grâce and the Pantheon, two public buildings which modify the whole atmosphere of that locality, projecting into it a yellowish tinge, and making sombre the habitations that lie within the shadow of their Domes. Here the

pavements are dry and clean, even the gutters are void of water and mud, and grass grows along the foot of the walls. Here the most careless of men feels in some sort the subduing sadness which falls upon every passenger through these streets—streets where one becomes startled, interested, at the rare sound of wheels, where one looks up at houses bleak and sombre, and gathers from their strong masonry a sentiment of the prison-house. To a Parisian who should wander in thither the whole region would speak only of lodging-houses and public institutions, of poverty and monotony, of old age on its way to death, of joyous youth bound hard to the task-work of labour. No quarter of Paris is uglier than this, or, be it added, more unknown. The Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève itself, above all others, is like a frame-work of bronze, especially fashioned to be the setting of such a picture of human life as we are presently to look upon, a picture for which the mind cannot be too carefully prepared by the long contemplation of sad colours and serious thoughts. Even so, as the traveller descends into the catacombs, stage by stage the day diminishes behind him and the conductor's droning chant grows hollower still. An apt comparison!—for who shall say which is the more horrible to our eyes, the empty white skulls of the dead or the dried-up hearts of the living?

Looked at from the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, the house is only seen in cross-section, for it is built at right-angles to the street, the façade fronting upon a little garden. For the whole length of this façade, and separating the house from the garden-level, is a sunken or groove-like cobbled way about six feet in width. Parallel with this causeway runs a gravel walk

with a border of geraniums, oleanders and pomegranates, all set in large blue and white samples of Faience ware. To this gravel walk access is had through a small doorway surmounted by the legend, in large capitals, MAISON VAUQUER, followed by the announcement "Board for Families or for Single Persons." In the daytime one can see into the garden from the street through a wicket-gate—the opening of which is announced to those within by the outcry of a sentinel bell—and may observe on the opposite wall, at the end of the gravel walk, the painted semblance of an arcade in green marble, the work of a local artist. On the strength of this suggestion some one has enshrined there a statue of Cupid—and, perhaps, having regard to the scaling condition of the little god's polished skin, a student of symbolisms might find in this figure an allegory of that Parisian *Love* which comes for treatment, in time, to a certain hospital not far off. But on the pedestal there is a half-obliterated inscription which fixes the date and purpose of this work of art, since it recalls that great scene of enthusiasm attending Voltaire's return to Paris in 1777:—

> "Whoe'er thou art, thy Master see—
> He is, or was, or ought to be."

At nightfall the wicket is replaced by a solid door. The little garden, just as broad as the façade is long, is bounded at one side by the street-wall and on the other by the dividing wall of the next house, the latter being entirely screened by a mantle of ivy, a picturesque effect which, as it is not often seen in Paris, attracts the attention of all passers-by. Each of these

walls is further adorned with trellised vines which yield a meagre and dusty fruitage. This fruitage, none the less, is to Madame Vauquer the subject of annual anxieties and anticipations, and of a great deal of conversation with her boarders. Along by each wall runs a narrow path, leading to a clump of lime trees (*tilleuls*), a word which Madame Vauquer, in spite of her being *née* de Conflans and in spite of the Grammatical Observations* aimed at her by the boarders, calls and persists in calling *tieuilles*.

The centre of the space between the walks is occupied by a square bed of artichokes, flanked by rows of fruit trees cut into distaff shape; and these again are within a border of sorrel, lettuce,

* It seems worth remarking (for it is probably not known to many compatriots of Balzac to-day) that it is not by any mere looseness of speech that he uses here the wide phrase "grammatical observations" when the reference is obviously to a mistake in pronunciation only. The truth is that *Observations Grammaticales* was a quite definite term, the title of a separate section in the grammar-books that were extant in his day. I have before me now "Le Maître Italien, où la Grammaire Françoise et Italienne de Veneroni, Secretaire Interprete du Roi." The date of this edition is 1792; but a very exhaustive and precise title page shows this to have been at that time an esteemed work of old standing and in great vogue. Amongst other things, it is now (1792) "exactement corrigée suivant l'Orthographie moderne et les decisions de l'Académie de la Crusca." The third section of the book (pp. 22-63) is entitled "Observations Grammaticales sur la Langue Italienne." With what we understand by "grammar" nowadays—rules of accidence and syntax—it has almost nothing to do; but is concerned with the correct usage, spelling, pronunciation of certain phrases, words and letters. Opening at random, one finds (under B) "*Bagio*, un baiser, n'est pas bien dit, il faut dire, *bacio*. De même on dit, *baciare*, non pas *bagiare*;" and again (under C) "*Cherico*, clerc, disent & écrivent les Florentins. Le reste de l'Italie aime mieux *chierico*, & on prononce la première syllabe d'une manière écrasée." Madame Vauquer's manner of speech was, it would seem, not sufficiently *écrasée*, and so the boarders came to her aid with their *observations grammaticales*. —Tr.

and parsley. Under the lime trees at the foot stands a round table, painted green, and about it are placed a number of garden seats. Thither, while the dog-days rage, such of the boarders as are rich enough to afford themselves the luxury of extra coffee, are wont to gather, and there sip their luxury in the midst of an atmosphere hot enough, even in the shade, to hatch an egg. The front of the house shows three storeys—but above that there is an attic floor—and is built with rough-hewn stone and pointed with that yellow stucco which gives so mean a look to nearly all the buildings in Paris. Each of those three floors is indicated by a row of five windows, all uniform in their small square panes of glass and all at variance in the disposition of their blinds, no two of which are raised or lowered to the same level. The side of the house shows two windows only for each floor, and the lowest ones are ornamented with a gridiron of strong bars.

In the rear of the house extends a courtyard, some twenty feet outward, inhabited by a happy family of pigs, poultry, and rabbits, and at the end of it is a shed in which firewood is stacked. Between this woodshed and the kitchen window hangs the safe, and just under it is the exterior drain-hole into which fall the waters from the kitchen sink—a greasy tributary. A small door opens from the courtyard into the street, and through this door the cook is wont to drive forth with her broom the varied dirt and dirtiness of the whole house, swilling the courtyard with manful relays of water to avoid a pestilence.

In a house, that has the appearance of having been fore-ordained to be used as a Pension Bourgeoise, the ground floor, of course, comprises a principal room or salon. This is lighted by the

two windows looking out upon the street, and is entered through a French casement. The salon communicates with a dining-room which is separated from the kitchen by the well of the staircase, and of this staircase the steps are composed partly of wood and partly of small squares of tile variously coloured and highly polished.

A more depressing sight there could not be than this salon with its chairs and lounges all upholstered in horsehair cloth plaited or woven into stripes alternately dull and shiny: its round table in the middle of the room with a Sainte-Anne marble top, on which is displayed a tea service in white china with half-obliterated gold lines—a kind of domestic ornament which confronts one everywhere nowadays. The flooring of this room is very uneven, but the wall is wainscotted as high as one's shoulder. Above the wainscotting stretches a varnished wall-paper on which are pictorial representations of the principal incidents in *Tèlèmaque*, the classic personages therein being given in colour. The panel between the gridironed windows permits the boarders to look in upon the feast given by Calypso to the son of Ulysses. For now forty years this picture has served to stimulate the jocularity of the younger boarders who seek to show that they are superior to their position by making fun of the dinner to which their penury condemns them. That a fire is lit in this room only on the most imposing occasions is attested by the tidiness of the hearth at all times; and above the hearth projects a stone mantelpiece ornamented by two vases full of artificial flowers, grown old in their glass-cases, which reinforce the decorative effect of a bluish marble timepiece in the very worst taste.

This first room exhales an odour for which there is no recognised term in the language, and we can do no better than call it the Boarding-House Odour. There is in it a sense of pent-up air, of musty furniture, of things gone sour. It chills the skin, it smells damp, it penetrates your clothing ; it tastes in the mouth like a place where people have just dined. Its violent flavours of kitchen and scullery are impregnated with a reeking something that suggests the hospital. But indeed it is not to be described, unless there were some way of distinguishing, measuring and reducing to a notation or formula all the physiological and nauseous emanations flowing into the general atmosphere from each of the boarders, young and old. And yet, all this depressing hideousness notwithstanding, if you compare this room with the dining-room adjoining, you would esteem it as an apartment elegant, and pleasantly perfumed, as a drawing-room or boudoir ought to be.

The dining-room is wainscotted to the ceiling, and at some former time was painted a colour which cannot be identified now. This colour, whatever it was, is but a foundation on which successive layers of dirt have disposed themselves in obvious contours that form an occasional eccentric device. Round the room are a number of sticky sideboards, on which stand a collection of fluted glass decanters with dulled and damaged lines ; round metal discs with a satiny sheen, piles of blue-bordered plates of thick Tournai earthenware. In a corner you notice a box divided into numbered pigeon-holes, wherein are placed the dinner napkins, food-soiled and wine-stained, of the various boarders. In this room you find those articles of furniture which are

proscribed from every other kind of dwelling, but which defy destruction nevertheless, and so are relegated to depositories like this, just as the human wreckage of civilisation finds its way to the Hospital for Incurables. Here will you see the weather-house barometer with its Capucin friar who comes out when it rains ; those engravings wretched enough to take away your appetite, every one of them in its wooden frame, which is black and varnished and ornamented with a gold beading ; that clock with a tortoise-shell case encrusted with brass ; that green stove, the Argand lamps containing oil and dust—and in the midst there is a long table with an oil-cloth covering so foul with grease that a facetious *externe* or day-boarder has signed his name there with no other stylus than his finger-nail. The chairs are cripples, the poor little straw mats are continually coming undone, but never quite done for. The foot-warmers are in a wretched plight, broken about the holes, with damaged hinges, their own wood-work charred to carbon here and there. But to describe fully the furnishings of this room—to show how old, how cracked, how rotten and shaky everything is, how worm-eaten, one-armed, one-eyed, invalid altogether and expiring is the general condition there—would require an amount of description which would retard the interest of our story to an extent which impatient readers would not pardon. The red-tiled floor is full of inequalities due to the different amount of wear in different parts and the many renewings of colour over all. In a word, here you have poverty without any of the poetry that may sometimes belong to it ; a poverty economical, concentrated, ground fine to utter shabbiness. It is above the gutter, indeed,

but it is stained already with the splashings of the mire; it does not walk in rags and tatters, but its decayed raiment is ready to drop to pieces.

This apartment is in all its glory when, about seven o'clock in the morning, Madame Vauquer's cat enters as the herald of his coming mistress, jumps on the sideboards, sniffs at the milk in several bowls covered with plates, the while he sends forth his morning *rong-rong* for all to hear. His mistress enters almost immediately afterwards, shuffling along the ground, her feet encased in gaping carpet slippers, and her head decked with a tulle cap, under which hangs a front of false hair set very much awry. Her face is oldish and fatty, and from the midst emerges a nose like a parrot's beak. Her small pudgy hands, her body as sleek as a rat in a barn,* her bust overfull and pendulous—all are in tone with this apartment which seems to ooze with the expressions of misfortune, an apartment whose stifling and fetid airs are breathed by Madame Vauquer without discomfort or discouragement. Add that her complexion has the freshness of a frost in early autumn, that her eyelids are wrinkled, and that her eyes have an expression that varies between the regulation smile of a ballet-girl and the suspicious scowl of a bill-broker. In a word, her whole person and appearance explain the boarding-house, as the boarding-house implies such a person as hers; the jail and the jail-keeper are thus related—if you think of the one, you must think of the other. The lardy fatness of this little woman is an outcome of the life that is lived here, just as typhus is begotten from the exhalations of a

* In French, "sleek as a church mouse."

lazaretto. She wears a skirt made out of an old robe, but it is not long enough to conceal a padded petticoat of knitted wool with the wadding coming through the rents in the material. And this one garment of hers sums up and expresses the drawing-room, the dining-room and the garden without, it announces the kitchen and the cookery, it conveys to you a premonition of what the boarders are like. With Madame Vauquer herself upon the scene, the stage is already full, the setting is complete.

Aged about fifty years, Madame Vauquer belongs to the type of women who "have had misfortunes." She has the glassy gaze and the innocent air of an intriguer or procuress who makes you understand that *she* is a respectable woman, in order to enhance the price of her services. But, for the rest, she is ready to do any turn that will make her own lot more comfortable, and will betray a Georges or a Pichegru, if there is still a Georges or a Pichegru to be betrayed. For all that, she is "a good soul at bottom" as the boarders say, who fancy that she has no other means of support than her business, and therefore sympathise when they hear her groaning and coughing like one of themselves. What had M. Vauquer been? She never spoke in very explicit terms about the departed gentleman. How had he lost his fortune? "Through unhappy circumstances," she replied. He had behaved badly towards her and had left her nothing except those eyes to weep with, this house to live in, and the right to have little sympathy with anybody's misfortunes, since she herself, she said, had suffered all that it is possible to suffer.

On hearing her mistress moving about, fat Sylvie, the cook, bestirred herself to set out the

breakfast of the resident boarders. The non-residents, as a rule, only engaged to have dinner in the house, and this cost them thirty francs a month. When our story begins there were seven resident boarders. The two best apartments were on the first floor, the smaller of these being occupied by Madame Vauquer herself. The other was rented by a Madame Couture, widow of a Commissary-General of the French Republic. She had with her a young girl named Victorine Taillefer, to whom she stood in the place of a mother. The board and lodging of those two ladies amounted to eighteen hundred francs. The two rooms on the second floor were inhabited, the one by an old fellow named Poiret, the other by a man of about forty years who wore a black wig, dyed his whiskers, gave out that he was a retired merchant, and called himself M. Vautrin. On the third floor there were four rooms, of which two were let, the one to an old maid named Mademoiselle Michonneau, the other to a retired manufacturer of vermicelli, Italian pastes and starch. He was known in the house as Père Goriot. The other two rooms on this floor were allotted to such birds of passage as, for instance, impecunious students who might resemble Père Goriot and Mademoiselle Michonneau in not being able to pay more than forty-five francs a month for their food and lodging. Madame Vauquer, however, did not greatly desire the presence of such guests, and only took them when she could get no better. They ate too much bread. At the time we speak of, one of those rooms belonged to a young man from the neighbourhood of Angoulême, who had come to Paris to study law, and was living upon the twelve hundred francs a year which his family—a

numerous one—managed to provide him with by dint of hard sparing and privation at home. Eugène de Rastignac—for that was his name—was one of those young men who are forced by family misfortunes to labour for their bread, and who understand well from their earliest years that the hopes of their relations are centred in them, and who prepare themselves accordingly for a brilliant future by planning out the scope and objective of their studies, adapting these in advance to the social changes which they foresee, to the end that they may be amongst the first to bring their own influence to bear and to turn these changes to their personal account. And, indeed, had it not been for Eugène de Rastignac's alert spirit of observation, and the good address by which he made a way for himself into the salons of Paris, this history would never have been presented to the reader with that local colour and truth which it owes entirely to his sagacity and to his desire to penetrate the mysteries of a lamentable life story which was as carefully concealed by those who made it what it was as by the poor victim who carried the burden of its sorrows.

Above the third floor there was a large garret, used for drying the house linen, and two attics where Christophe, the man-of-all-work, and fat Sylvie, the cook, slept o' nights. In addition to the seven resident boarders, Madame Vauquer had always, year in and year out, some eight students of law and medicine, also two or three customers living in the district, who were on the house-list for dinner alone. Eighteen people could sit down to dine, and the table would have held twenty at a pinch. The morning meal, however, had the appearance of a family reunion,

since only the seven residents took part in it. Everybody came down in his slippers and everybody permitted himself to speak in the most intimate way about the dress or the looks of the *externes* or out-guests, and upon all that had occurred at dinner the previous evening. Those seven boarders were, indeed, Madame Vauquer's spoilt children, and it was with the precision of an astronomer that she dealt out to them her kindly interest and her compliments—in exact proportion to the amount which they paid for board and lodging. Once gathered into this house, by whatever diversity of chances, all those human creatures were made subject to a single standard of worth and regard. The two lodgers on the second floor only paid sixty-two francs a month each. Such a cheap rate of living as this is only to be found in the Faubourg Saint-Marcel between the Bourbe and the Salpêtrière, and it indicates that the boarders, with the single exception of Madame Couture, were in a condition of more or less obvious distress or penury.

Let it be added that the depressing effect conveyed by our survey of the interior of the Maison Vauquer is only renewed and reinforced by a glance at the costume of the inhabitants, as dilapidated as the house itself. The men wore frock coats of a colour no longer recognisable; and shoes such as in more elegant quarters of the town are only seen in waste heaps or gutters; and linen utterly threadworn; and suits of clothes that were but the ghosts of what they once had been. The women's dresses were of a day long passed; they were re-dyed, faded, tricked out with bits of lace many times re-made and re-mended; their gloves were shiny through long use, their collars rusted with iron-mould,

their fichus always frayed. But however frail and time-worn might be the general style of garments in the Maison Vauquer, the bodies which wore them were in nearly every case very solidly put together, with constitutions which had outstood the storms of life very well, and with faces that were cold and hard and somewhat obliterated, like a coin that is ready to be taken out of use. They had wrinkled mouths, those faces, and behind the lips were rows of hungry teeth. From every boarder there came to the looker-on the sense of a drama accomplished or in action. Not dramas like those that are played before the footlights and against a background of painted canvas; but dramas, living and silent; dramas now frozen over which once gave hot compulsion to the heart; and dramas that go on and on.

Mademoiselle Michonneau wore over her weak eyes a greasy shade, covered with green taffeta and bounded by a metal rim, hideous enough to affright the Angel of Mercy himself. She went wrapped in a shawl with a meagre and draggled fringe, and the figure beneath it might have been a skeleton, so angular were the lines that it permitted to be seen. What acid was it that had caused this creature to shed every essential character and token of womanhood? At one time, it would seem, she had been pretty and of comely form. Was it then vice, or sorrow, or cupidity that had wrought this change? Or had she loved too well? Had she been some dealer in ladies' cast-off clothing or merely a courtesan and nothing more? Was she now expiating the insolence of her youth when she went joyously in triumph, and pleasures were scattered before her every path—expiating these now in an image of old age from which the passers-by recoiled

with aversion? Her blank gaze chilled the being on whom it was turned, her stunted figure was in itself a menace. Her voice was shrill, like a grasshopper in his bush crying against the approach of winter. She was in the habit of telling that she had taken care of an old gentleman who suffered from a catarrh of the bladder, and whom his own children had abandoned because he was thought to be without any means. This old gentleman had bequeathed to her a life annuity of a thousand francs, which was continually fought against by his heirs, who made her the object of their calumny as well as their ill-will. Although the fierce play of passion had sadly ravaged the interest of her face, her skin had yet a whiteness and fineness of texture here and there which made it possible to think that the body of the woman even now, perhaps, had not lost every charm.

M. Poiret was a sort of automaton. To see him gliding like a grey shadow along an alley in the Jardin des Plantes, an old flat cap on his head, holding almost by the tips of his fingers his cane with the yellow ivory knob, his coat-skirts waving behind him and displaying the better part of a pair of breeches which contained almost nothing, his blue-stockinged legs shaking like those of a man in drink, with his dingy white waistcoat and his crumpled frill of coarse muslin, which was never in full connection with the cravat that was twisted round a neck that might have belonged to a turkey—to see this apparition set people asking whether this strange Chinese figure of a man really belonged to that courageous race of the sons of Japhet who flutter along the Boulevard des Italiens. What labour was it that had shrunk the man to this—or what

passion was it that had stained to a bistre tint that bulbous countenance, which might have passed for a caricature had it been a little more human and comely? What had he been? Well, perhaps he had done his work near the Ministry of Justice—perhaps a clerk in the department to which the public executioner sends in his note of disbursements: so much for providing the black veils of parricides deceased, so much on account of bran for the baskets, or new cord for the knives. Perhaps he had been Receiver at the gate of some slaughter-house, or an assistant inspector of nuisances. And indeed, he seemed to have been one of the despised beasts of burden in the grinding mill of our social world, one of those Ratons of Paris who do not even know who their Bertrands are, a mere pivot which we use to turn and to tip out of sight for ever the things unfortunate and the things foul of a great city—one of those men, in fine, whom we look at wonderingly and say, "Not a nice sort at all; but a sort that is needed along with the rest." Paris the Beautiful knows nothing concerning those faces bleached by moral and physical suffering. But Paris is truly an ocean. Cast your lead there, and you will never know how deep it is. Voyage over it, up and down, set yourself to describe what you have gathered and surveyed: but whatever pains you may take to voyage over all its waters and to describe its wonders, and however many and zealous may be the explorers of this sea, yet there will always be met some new region unvisited before, some cavern unknown, and flowers, and pearls, and strange creatures of the deep, something that no man has yet announced, something quite overlooked till now by every diver in that sea of Literature.

The Maison Vauquer is one of these: a new strange creature found in the Deep.

There were two figures that stood in striking contrast to the other inmates and frequenters of the house. Mademoiselle Victorine Taillefer had, indeed, a sickly pallor like that of anæmic young girls, and her habitual sadness, her embarrassed look, and her poor and pinched air seemed to connect her fitly enough with the general condition of suffering which forms the background of this picture. Nevertheless, hers was, at any rate, a young face, and her movements and her voice were easy and pleasing. This young creature was like a shrub newly transplanted to unfriendly soil, its leaves beginning to wither already. The faint warmth with which her light brown hair surrounded the pale features, and her slim, pure figure gave her some of that grace which modern poets find in mediæval sculpture, and from her dark blue eyes came an expression of gentleness, a kind of Christian resignation. Her dress was of simple fashion and cheap enough material, but the lines which it revealed were those of a young and tender girl's form. Placed against the other boarders, she became pretty by contrast. If she had been happy, she would have been beautiful; for happiness is the poetry of women, as dress is their artifice. If the joy of a ballroom had lent its roseate glow to this pale face; if the calm and kindness of a refined life had filled out and coloured those cheeks that were already a little sunken, if love had come to animate those eyes with its own light —Victorine would have stood comparison with any of the prettiest girls of her own age. But she was without those two things which make the second birth of a woman: dresses and love-letters.

Her history might have made the subject of a book. Her father believed that he had good reason not to acknowledge her as his, and refused to have her with him. He made her an allowance of only six hundred francs and had executed a legal deed to enable him to bequeath his entire fortune to his son. Victorine's mother had betaken herself to the house of Madame Couture, who was a distant relative of hers, and had died broken-hearted; and after her death Madame Couture took charge of the orphan as though it were her own child. Unfortunately, however, the wife of the Commissary-General of the armies of the Republic possessed no means in the world except her marriage jointure and her widow's pension; and who knew when the day would come when she might have to leave this poor girl, without experience and without means of support, to the mercy of the world? The good woman took Victorine to mass every Sunday and to confession twice a month, and so tried to make her at any rate a good girl. She was right. Religious sentiment offered an outlet and a hope to this poor child, who loved the father who had disowned her, and made a journey once a year to lay before him the forgiveness of her mother. But every year she beat in vain at the door which was firmly closed against her. Her only link with him was through her brother, and he had neither visited her for the past four years nor did he send her any help. She prayed to God to unseal her father's eyes and to soften her brother's heart, but even in her prayers she did not accuse them. Madame Couture and Madame Vauquer could not find words enough in the vocabulary of abuse to describe this man's barbarous conduct; but while they reviled the "in-

famous millionaire" to their 'hearts' content, Victorine had none but gentle words to utter, like the death song of a wounded dove whose cry of pain is still the very voice of affection.

Eugène de Rastignac had a southern physiognomy: pale face, dark hair, and blue eyes. His figure, his manner, his whole bearing gave an impression that he was either the son of a noble family, or that he had been brought up amongst refined traditions, and had received good taste for a heritage. If he was careful of his wardrobe, and on ordinary days was content to wear the best suit of a former year, yet when he chose he could go into the world as well appointed as any young man of fashion in Paris. At other times he wore the old surtout, the shabby waistcoat, the wretched black tie, frayed and fastened about the neck anyhow, which are the mark of the student, pantaloons that matched the rest of his garments, and boots that had been to the bootmaker's for a new sole.

Between these two young persons and the rest of the household a sort of connecting link was formed by Vautrin, the man of forty with the dyed whiskers. He was the kind of man of whom folk will say, "there goes a jolly sort!" He had wide shoulders, well developed chest, marked muscular development, thick hands with square-pointed fingers, the joints covered with little tufts of fiery red hair. His face prematurely delved with wrinkles, gave an impression of harshness that was little in keeping with his supple and social manner. His deep bass voice was in tone with his brusque gaiety, and was not displeasing. He was always obliging, and always jocular. If something went wrong with a lock, in a trice he had unfixed it, taken it to

pieces, cleaned it, oiled it, put it together and fixed it up again in going order, and then he would say, "you see, it *knows* me, that's all." And, indeed, he knew everything: all about ships and shipping, the sea, the whole of France, foreign countries, the business world, men, public events, great houses, and prisons. If any one was moaning his fate very much, Vautrin would immediately make an offer of services. He had on a number of occasions lent money to Madame Vauquer and to some of the boarders. But those who were under this obligation would rather have died than not have refunded at the right time, so unmistakable, his air of good humour notwithstanding, was the sense of fear which he inspired by a certain penetrating and resolute gaze which he had at command. Even the way in which he would launch a jet of saliva gave the impression of a cool daring which nothing could dismay and which would not recoil from any crime in order to escape from a difficult situation. He was like a stern judge among them, his glance seemed to plunge to the very bottom of every question, everybody's consciousness, everybody's feelings and thoughts. He was accustomed to go out after breakfast, to return for dinner, then to go off for the rest of the evening and to return about midnight. He admitted himself by a pass-key which Madame Vauquer permitted him, and him alone, the privilege of using. But then he was on the best of terms with the widow. He would call her "mamma," and put his arm round her waist—a greater compliment than he got credit for. For though the good woman believed that anybody could do that, as a fact Vautrin was the only man in the house whose arm was long enough to have gone round

that massive circumference. It was quite a characteristic trait in him that he paid the generous price of fifteen francs a month for the *gloria* (cup of coffee with a dash of brandy) which he took after dinner. A less superficial community than that formed of those young people caught up in the whirl of Parisian life, or those old folk, careless of everything that did not immediately touch themselves, would not have remained satisfied with the dubious impression which this man gave of his character and his life. He knew or divined the affairs of everybody around him, while his own thoughts and his business remained a mystery to all. And yet, while he threw his apparent good humour, his obliging ways and his constant gaiety like a triple barrier between himself and others, there were times when he permitted them to have a glimpse into the frightful depths of his nature. In many a jest and sally worthy of a Juvenal would he give vent to his savage humour, scoffing at the laws, lashing the higher circles of society, pointing out the imbecility and inconsistency of it all, and creating an impression in the minds of his hearers that he had a personal quarrel with society to avenge, and that there was secret history of his own carefully hidden away in the depths of his life.

Attracted, perhaps unconsciously, by the strength of the one and the good looks of the other, Mademoiselle Taillefer divided her stolen glances and her secret thoughts between the man of forty and the young student. Neither of them, however, seemed to give a thought to her, although the day might come any morning when her position might be changed and she transformed into

a rich heiress. As a fact, none of the people in the house took sufficient interest in their neighbours to care to know whether their alleged misfortunes were true or false. The common condition of all caused them to regard one another with indifference qualified by distrust. None of them, they knew, could alleviate the other's distresses, and each of them had already drained the cup of condolence to its dregs in previous rehearsals of their several woes. Their case was like that of a very old married couple who have lived together so many years that they can no longer find anything to talk about. Between them there existed only the intercourse of a mechanical life, and the wheels of that machine were all in lack of oil. Not one of them but would have passed a blind beggar in the street, not one of them but would have listened without emotion to any man's tale of misfortune, and not one of them but would have regarded a death as only the solution of that riddle of wretchedness which left them cold to another creature's agony, however terrible. Amongst those dreary souls the most at ease was Madame Vauquer herself, who reigned over this infirmary for paying patients. For her alone the little garden, as desolate as an Asian steppe with its silence and its chill, its dryness and its damp, was a smiling, bosky grove. For her alone this gaunt yellow house with its musty smell of a chandler's shop, was an eligible, a delightful abode. Every cell in it was *hers*. Those victims of constraint, consigned to penal servitude for life there, were nourished by her, and she exercised over them an authority which no one questioned. Where else in Paris could those poor creatures have found, for the prices at which she supplied them,

wholesome food in sufficient quantities, and apartments which they were at liberty to make, if not exactly elegant and comfortable, at any rate clean and healthy? If she had been minded to practice some signal injustice on any of them, the victim would have borne it without a murmur.

A household of this description can hardly help containing, as this one did contain, all the elements of a complete society in little. Amongst these eighteen messmates there was to be found, as in colleges and as in the wide world, one poor figure buffeted by all, a mark for everybody's pleasantries to play upon. At the beginning of the second year this figure defined itself sharply upon the mind of Eugène de Rastignac, and henceforth had a deeper significance for him than all the others with whom he was condemned to live for two years longer. This scapegoat was the retired vermicelli-maker, Père Goriot, upon whose head a painter would have concentrated the whole light of his picture, as the historian must do here. By what sinister caprice did it come to birth, this contempt that was half a hatred, this persecution mixed with pity, this disrespect for misfortune—and why had it fallen upon *his* head, the oldest man of their company? Had he given occasion for it by one of those foolish acts or one of those eccentricities of behaviour which the world is less willing to pardon or to let pass than if they were vices of more serious moment? These questions bear closely upon many a social injustice. Perhaps it is a part of our common human nature to inflict injuries on whoever seems ready to suffer them, because he is utterly humble, or because he is weak, or because he is past caring. Do not

we all of us like to prove our strength against somebody or something? The creature of least consideration or power, the *gamin* of the street, will pull the door bell of other men's houses when the frost is keen outside, or will hoist himself up to inscribe his name upon a virgin monument unsullied till now.

Père Goriot, on retiring from business in his sixty-ninth year or thereabouts, had come in 1813 to reside in Madame Vauquer's boarding-house. At first he had taken the apartment now occupied by Madame Couture, and had paid twelve hundred francs a year, like a man to whom five louis more or less was a trifle not worth considering. To accommodate him, Madame Vauquer had furbished up the three chambers into which the apartment was divided, receiving on account of this a sum in advance sufficient, it was said, to cover the whole value of the shabby furnishings —which consisted of curtains of yellow calico, some chairs of varnished wood upholstered in Utrecht velvet, a few coloured prints stuck in frames, and wall-papers that a suburban tavern would have scorned. Perhaps the careless generosity with which Père Goriot (who at this period was respectfully called M. Goriot) allowed himself to be over-reached, was the cause of him being considered a simpleton who knew nothing about money matters. Goriot brought with him a well-furnished wardrobe, the handsome outfit of a tradesman who denies himself nothing on retiring from business. Madame Vauquer had remarked with admiration no less than eighteen cambric-fronted shirts, the fineness of whose texture was made more noticeable by the fact that the vermicelli merchant always wore upon his shirt-frill two pins connected by a little chain,

each of those pins consisting of a large mounted diamond. He usually wore a dark-blue coat, and put on a clean white piqué waistcoat every day, and below it there dangled in front of his portly and pear-shaped person a heavy gold chain with seals and charms. His snuff-box, also of gold, had a medallion containing several locks of hair, which at once laid him open to an accusation of having had some happy adventures in his day. When his landlady charged him with being "a naughty man," there passed over his lips the simpering smile of a harmless citizen whose little secret vanity has been flattered. His cupboards (he called them *ormoires*, in the dialect of the common people) were filled with plate which he had brought from his own house. The widow's eyes gleamed again as she obligingly lent him a hand to unpack and arrange in their places the silver soup-ladles, table-spoons, forks, cruets, sauce-boats, several dishes, silver-gilt breakfast services,* besides a

* The French word here used (*déjeuner*) seems to be a little obsolete in the sense that it has in this passage; and as the thing referred to is afterwards spoken of under different names, the whole story of Père Goriot's *déjeuner* is apt to confuse the reader not a little, whether he read it in English or French. Be it explained, then, that *déjeuner* (here, and at page 67, translated "breakfast service") is a collective term, connoting at least three articles: a salver or tray; the low, wide cup without handle (like a little bowl) in which the morning coffee was, and still is, taken; and the cover; also probably a small sugar-dish and a spoon. It was, and is, the custom in France to soak the bread in the morning coffee, hence this cup or dish (*écuelle*) was quite different from the small cup (*tasse*) used for black coffee or tea. Elsewhere in the book it is called a "soupière"—*i.e.*, dish for containing a soup, or sop, or posset. Miss Marriage, whose skilful translations of Balzac must command, in a special degree, the respect of those who, having followed in her steps, know well how difficult the work is, neatly—but somewhat bravely—renders *déjeuner* as "posset dish"; and some readers may care to compare *Esmond*, pp. 18

few pieces of ornamental plate more or less handsome, and weighing a considerable number of ounces. These were presents, he said, which he would not part with for the world, for they reminded him of the festival days of his married life.

"That," he said, as he put away a little silver-gilt breakfast cup with two doves billing on the cover, "was a present from my wife on the first anniversary of our marriage. Poor dear! she spent on it all the little savings of her maiden time. I tell you, Madame, I would rather dig the ground with my nails for a livelihood than part with that. Well, thank heaven! I can drink my morning coffee out of this cup for the rest of my days. So I have nothing to complain of—no, no, my bit of bread is baked and ready, for a long time to come."

To complete the effect of all this, the magpie eyes of Madame Vauquer had espied some particulars in the Register of Shareholders, and a vague calculation based on these could be made to credit M. Goriot (excellent man!) with an income of from eight to ten thousand francs. From that moment Madame Vauquer, *née* de Conflans, who had achieved forty-eight years of earthly life but only acknowledged thirty-nine of them, began to have ideas. Though the eyes of M. Goriot were somewhat sunken in their sockets, and the lids swollen, and watery withal, so that he had to dab them dry at frequent intervals, yet she found that he had a very agreeable air and a dignified bearing. Further, there were indica-

106 and 436 (Turner House Edition) for references to the salver of a posset dish, the cup and cover thereof, and (by implication) what the cup contained. But Père Goriot's *écuelle* contained only café au lait.—Tr.

tions of excellent moral qualities—a thing to which Madame Vauquer attached the greatest importance—in his plump and salient leg, as also in his long broad-based nose, and these prognostics were *confirmed* by the somewhat silly simplicity of the worthy man's moon-like visage. A solidly built simple nature, no doubt, was here, one capable of wasting all the little mental life it had in a sentimental devotion of some sort. His hair, which he wore in "pigeon's wing" fashion (a hairdresser from the Ecole Polytechnique came to powder it every morning), was drawn to five points on his low forehead, and formed an agreeable decoration to his face. Although his manner was a little uncultivated, yet he was always so well-appointed in his dress, he opened his snuff-box with so rich an air, he whipped up his pinch so thoroughly in the manner of a man who is assured that *he* will never be without a supply of the best Maccabaw that, on the very evening of his first arrival in her house, Madame Vauquer went to bed as warm as a basted partridge, fairly frying with one desire—that she might issue forthwith from the shroud of Vauquer to be born again as Goriot. To marry, to sell her boarding-house, to give her arm to this fine flower of middle-class citizenship, to become a lady of importance in the quarter, to solicit subscriptions for charitable purposes, to take little trips of a Sunday to Choisy, Soisy, Gentilly, to go to the theatre as often as she had a mind and sit in the boxes, instead of having to wait till some boarder gave her a free pass that he had got from the author, perhaps in July ——ah! she dreamed of it all, the ideal of a life, the Eldorado of the small Parisian householder. She had let nobody know hitherto that she had

forty thousand francs, saved and amassed sou by sou. Surely, she told herself, it was an eligible match for him from the money point of view.

"And in other respects," she said to herself, "I am good enough for the worthy man." And she turned herself in bed as if to assure herself of the charms of that person whereof fat Sylvie found a faithful image every morning, cast, not in plaster, but in a feather mould.

For about two months from this date Madame Vauquer availed herself of the visits of M. Goriot's barber, and went to some expense over her toilet, explaining, by way of excuse, that it was necessary to give the house an aspect of decorum worthy of the highly respectable persons who honoured it with their presence. She took some roundabout steps to effect a change in the personnel of her establishment, announcing her intention of accepting in future only such applicants as were in *every* way most *select*. If a stranger came to make inquiries, she was careful to let him know of the preference which M. Goriot, one of the best known and most respected business men in Paris, had shown for her establishment. She circulated a number of Prospectuses, headed by the inscription, MAISON VAUQUER. This was, she declared, *one of the oldest and most highly recommended boarding-houses in the Latin Quarter*. It afforded a most delightful view over the Valley of Gobelins (you could see it from the third floor), and possessed a *beautiful* garden, at the foot of which there STRETCHED an AVENUE of lime trees. Mention was made of the healthy air and the quiet of the situation.

This prospectus brought to her Madame la Comtesse de l'Ambermesnil, a lady of thirty-six years, who was awaiting the liquidation of her husband's affairs, and the authorisation of the pension due to her as the widow of a general who had died on the "field of battle." Madame Vauquer now gave more attention to her table, had a fire burning in the salon and dining-room for nearly six months, and kept the promises of her prospectus so well as even to lay out a little money. And the Comtesse told Madame Vauquer, whom she addressed as "my dear," that she would get the Baronne de Vaumerland and the widow of a colonel—the Comte Picquaiseau—two dear friends of hers, to come and board in the house. They were only waiting to finish their season at Marais, where they were living in a *pension* much more expensive than the Maison Vauquer. These ladies, she remarked, would be very well off indeed as soon as the War Office had finished with their case.

"But you know," she said, "those government offices take such a *time* to have done with anything."

The two widows would withdraw to Madame Vauquer's chamber after dinner, there to engage in little talks, and to partake of certain dainties, and to sip the black-currant ratafia reserved by the mistress of the house for her private uses. Madame de l'Ambermesnil heartily approved of her landlady's views in regard to M. Goriot. The idea was an admirable one, and had occurred to her on the very day of her arrival. He was a most excellent style of a man.

"Ah, you may say so, my dear lady," said the widow," a man as sound as the apple of my eye,

and so well preserved: a man still capable of making himself very agreeable to a woman."

The Comtesse kindly gave Madame Vauquer a number of hints in regard to her toilette, which, she pointed out, was not in keeping with her present projects.

"You must put yourself on a war footing," she said.

After much careful consideration, the two widows went to the Palais Royal and there purchased, at one of the show-rooms fronting on the Bois, a hat with feathers and a bonnet. The Comtesse next carried her friend to the *Magasin de la Petite Jeannette*, where they chose a dress and a scarf. When these pieces of heavy ordnance were set to play upon the enemy—when the widow, that is to say, was dressed in full panoply of war—she looked for all the world like the familiar picture that hangs over the door of an *à la mode* beef shop. She found her charms much enhanced by the change, and felt so obliged to the Comtesse, that, albeit anything but free-handed as a rule, she begged that lady now to accept from her a twenty-franc hat. As a fact, she was counting on her help not only to sound Goriot in regard to possibilities, but to bring her (Madame Vauquer's) various merits under his notice in the course of conversation. Madame de l'Ambermesnil addressed herself to this task in the most friendly way, laid daily siege to the vermicelli merchant, and at last succeeded in bringing matters to the critical stage of a private interview. But the good soul developed so much modest aversion, not to say anger, when she had unfolded her business—which was nothing less than to make an enticing proposition *on her own account*—that she issued

from that intervew in a high state of indignation at the grossness of the man.

"My angel," she said to her dear friend, "you will make nothing of that creature. He is insanely suspicious—and a sordid miser—and an idiot—and a fool, who would give you nothing but wretchedness."

After what had passed between M. Goriot and Madame de l'Ambermesnil, that lady found it impossible even to continue under the same roof with him; and accordingly she departed on the following day. In doing so she forgot to settle her six months' bill for board and lodging, but left behind effects, in the shape of cast-off clothing, to the value of five francs. In spite of the most diligent inquiries, no part of Paris was able to give Madame Vauquer the slightest information regarding the Comtesse de l'Ambermesnil. She often spoke of this deplorable affair, and said she was far too trusting. In reality, she was as suspicious as a cat: only, like a good many other people, she would be on her guard against her own friends and then deliver herself into the hands of the first chance comer. It seems a moral anomaly, but it is common enough, and is easily traced to the human heart in which it has its roots. It would seem that some kinds of people permit themselves to hope for nothing from those whom they live with, because they have already betrayed to these their own emptiness of soul, and consequently feel in their presence the weight of the condemnation, unspoken though it be, which they are conscious of having merited. But they feel yet an invincible need of the flattering opinion which is not vouchsafed by those who know them best, or they become emulous of appearing, at least, to

have the qualities which do not belong to them. So they will seek to gain, as it were by a surprise or a misprision, the esteem or the affection of utter strangers, even though they know that they will one day have to surrender it again. Then there are some so mercenary in grain that they will do no kindness to friends or relations of their own, because therein they would only be accomplishing an act of duty for which they could give themselves no particular credit; whereas the same service rendered to some one who had no claim upon them would justly raise them in their own esteem. Such beings have little love to shed within the proper circle of their affections, but are quite at the disposal of the surrounding world. With both of these moral groups—essentially paltry, insincere, and hateful—Madame Vauquer had an undoubted affinity.

"If I had been here then," Vautrin would say, "this misfortune would not have occurred. I should jolly soon have unmasked your comedy countess for you. I know their pretty chivvies."

Like all people of contracted intelligence, Madame Vauquer could never draw her mind away from the mere facts of an occurrence to form any kind of judgment of the causes underlying it: and when anything occurred through her own fault, she liked to put the blame on somebody else. After this loss had befallen her, she regarded the worthy vermicelli-maker as the originator of her misfortune, and began from that time to see clearly, as she said, what kind of man he was. As soon as she recognised that her lures for him were laid in vain, and that her disbursements were to yield her no return, she was not long in guessing the reason. It was then that she perceived that her boarder had already, as

she expressed it, *fascinations* elsewhere. It was evident, in short, that the hopes she had clasped so tenderly to her heart had no more basis than a phantasm, and that, in the vigorous words of the Comtesse, "she would never make anything of *that* creature." The Comtesse seemed to be a good judge of men, at any rate. As was bound to happen, Madame Vauquer now went further in her sentiment of aversion than she had formerly gone in that of goodwill, and conceived for her lodger a hatred that was due not to the love that he had scorned, but to the hopes that he had falsified. For in its progress toward the heights of affection the human heart will often come to rest at some point lower than the highest, and will there remain; but once started on the downward slope to hatred, it seldom pauses till it has reached the utter depths.

Howbeit, M. Goriot was still her lodger, so the widow was obliged to keep the expressions of her wounded self-love under some kind of control. Her position was like that of a monk who, however much harassed by his Prior, must needs bury within his own breast his sighs of suffering and his desire for vengeance.

It is by an iteration of petty acts that petty spirits express their sentiments of liking or dislike. The widow used all the malicious ingenuity of a woman in inventing little stupid persecutions against her victim. To begin with, she cut off the table luxuries lately introduced into the menu.

"No more gherkins, no more anchovies," she said to fat Sylvie—"they are a fraud!" And from that morning the old bill of fare was re-established.

M. Goriot was a frugal man, however, and the

parsimony which is forced upon folk who have to make their way in life had in him degenerated into a habit. Soup, boiled beef, a plate of vegetables, had been and would continue to be the things he liked best for dinner. It was thus rather difficult for Madame Vauquer to annoy her boarder, since she could not well cross his tastes. But the man's immunity to attack exasperated her all the more, and she now began to address him and to speak of him with marked discourtesy, and set about making her boarders share in her own aversion for Goriot. These, merely in seeking their own amusement, became the tools of her vengeance. By the end of the first year, the widow's evil opinion had reached such a pitch that she began to ask herself how it came that this merchant—with an income of eight thousand livres a year, with a lot of splendid plate, and with jewels as handsome as those of a kept mistress—should be living in her house and paying for his board a sum so insignificant in proportion to his fortune. During the greater part of this year Goriot had been in the habit of dining abroad a great deal, often twice a week. But little by little it came about that he only dined outside about twice a month. Those little pleasurings of M. Goriot had suited Madame Vauquer's interests perfectly, and therefore she observed with discontent the increasing regularity with which he now dined at her table. She attributed the change as much to a desire to annoy his hostess as to a gradual diminution of income. One of the most hateful traits of those pigmy souls is their readiness to read their own pigmy motives into other minds.

Alas, at the end of the second year M. Goriot justified all the idle gossip concerning him, by

asking permission to pass from the first to the second floor and to reduce his board to nine hundred francs. It was necessary for him to exercise such strict economy that he no longer had a fire in his room in winter. When he made this proposal Madame Vauquer demanded payment in advance. M. Goriot agreed; and from this time onward she called him Père Goriot.*

Who could say what was the cause of this fall? It was difficult to find out. As the false Comtesse had said, Père Goriot was secretive, taciturn. Now the logic of the empty-headed, who tell all they know because they have only nothings to talk about, has established it as a truth that the people who don't speak to you of their private affairs must have a good reason for their silence. Thus the distinguished merchant now became a scamp, the beau of yesterday was the old fool of to-day. There was no dearth of histories for him. At one time there was the theory—propounded by Vautrin, who came to live in the Maison Vauquer about this time—that Père Goriot was a speculator who had been ruined on the Stock Exchange, and still frequented the old scene to dabble in a small way in Shares and Government Securities. At another time it was held that he was one of those petty gamblers who go regularly every evening to win or lose their ten francs or so. Again, he was a spy in the service of the Criminal Investigation Department, though Vautrin held that he "was not fly enough for one of *them*." At another time, he was a grasping skin-flint who lent small sums of money for

* Père = father. Used as a nickname, the term implies familiarity and disrespect. "Daddy" is sometimes used to the same purpose among us, and there is an early *sort of* translation of this book under the title of "Daddy Goriot."—Tr.

periods of a few days at extortionate interest. And yet again he was a speculator in lottery tickets—in a word, there was no vice, nor shame, nor wretchedness round which an air of mystery could gather, but they gave him credit for it. Only, however contemptible his conduct or his vices may have been, the aversion he inspired stopped short of driving him from the house: he paid his board. Besides, he was useful, too; for everybody exercised his wits or vented his humour on Goriot; and if the humour sometimes hit him as lightly as the butt-end of a musket, what of that? The most probable opinion about him, and the one which had most adherents, was that of Madame Vauquer, namely, that this man —so well preserved, as healthy as the apple of her eye, a man who was still capable of making himself very agreeable to a woman—was a libertine with abnormal appetites. Here are the facts on which Madame Vauquer based these slanders. Some months after the departure of the disastrous Comtesse who had managed to live for six months at her expense, she heard one morning, while still in bed, the rustling of a silk skirt and the mincing step of a light-footed young woman ascending the staircase and going in the direction of Père Goriot's room, whose door she heard opened. Immediately after, fat Sylvie came to tell her mistress that a girl, too pretty to be honest, "and dressed like a goddess," wearing prunella shoes which had not touched the dirt, had glided like an eel from the street down to her kitchen and asked for M. Goriot's room. Madame Vauquer and the cook set themselves to listen, and overheard several affectionate phrases used in the course of the visit, which lasted some time. When M. Goriot conducted

"his lady" back to the street, fat Sylvie at once seized her basket as if to go a-shopping and followed the amorous couple.

"Madame," she said to her mistress on returning, "M. Goriot must be tremendously rich after all, to keep them in that style. Just fancy! at the corner of the Place de l'Estrapade she stepped into a splendid carriage which was *waiting for her*."

At dinner Madame Vauquer crossed to the window and drew the curtain to exclude a ray of sunlight which was troubling M. Goriot's eyes.

"You are loved by the fair, Monsieur Goriot; the sun seeks you out," she said, alluding to the visit which he had received. "My word! you have capital taste. She was very pretty."

"That was my daughter," he said, with a sort of pride. But the boarders could see in it nothing but the fatuity of an old fellow trying to save appearances.

A month later M. Goriot received another visit. The daughter who had come before in morning dress now came after dinner, robed as if she were on her way to keep some social engagement. The boarders who were all chatting in the drawing-room could see that she was a pretty fair-haired woman, slender and graceful, and much too distinguished to be the daughter of Père Goriot.

"Two of them!" exclaimed fat Sylvie; for she did not recognise her again.

A few days later another young woman, tall and of good figure, and dark, with black hair and bright eyes, asked for M. Goriot.

"Three of them!" said Sylvie.

This second daughter, who also had first called to see her father in the morning, came a few

days later, dressed for a ball. She had driven up in a cab.

"Four of them!" said Madame Vauquer and fat Sylvie, who found in this grand lady no trace of the girl who was dressed so simply on the morning of her first visit.

Goriot was still paying twelve hundred francs a year at this time. Madame Vauquer found it quite natural that a rich man should have four or five mistresses, and she also thought it very neat of him to pass them off as his daughters. She did not lay much stress on the fact that he had them come to see him in the Maison Vauquer. Only, since those visits helped her to understand her boarder's indifference to her proffered regards, she permitted herself, about the beginning of the second year, to speak of him as an "old Tomcat." But when she met one of those ladies on the stairs after her lodger fell to the level of those who pay only nine hundred francs, she asked him in insolent tones what sort of house he thought she kept? Père Goriot answered that the lady was his eldest daughter.

"Ah, you have thirty-six daughters, haven't you?" said Madame Vauquer, viciously.

"I have only two," replied the boarder in the quiet tones of a ruined man who is approaching the utter submissiveness of the wretched.

Towards the end of the third year Père Goriot reduced his expenses still further, by mounting to the third floor, and henceforth paying only forty-five francs a month. He denied himself snuff, dismissed his hairdresser, and wore powder no more. When he appeared for the first time in this condition his hostess uttered a cry of surprise on seeing the colour of his hair, which was of a dirty greenish grey. His face, to which

secret sorrow had given an expression that grew sadder and sadder every day, seemed the most desolate of all that sat round that table. There was no longer any doubt about it: Père Goriot was an old libertine whose eyes had only been preserved for him by the skill of his physician in counteracting the malign influence of the specifics which were prescribed for his maladies. The loathsome colour of his hair was due to his excesses and to the drugs which he took to enable him to continue them. The physical and moral condition into which he lapsed seemed, indeed, to justify the wretched drivel that was talked about him. When his outfit was worn away he replaced the fine linen with calico bought at fourteen sous an ell. His diamonds, his gold snuff-box, his chain, his jewels, disappeared one by one. He gave up wearing the blue top-coat and all his rich and comfortable garments; and wore instead, in winter and summer, a maroon-coloured coat of coarse material, a waistcoat of mohair pile,* and corduroy breeches. He grew thinner and thinner. His calves shrunk. His cheeks, that were formerly rounded and full of the sheer self-content of a happy bourgeois, were now terribly shrivelled. His brow was deeply wrinkled, the line of his jaw jutted sharply outward. In the fourth year of his residence in the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève he was no longer like the man he had been. The hearty vermicelli merchant of sixty-two years who only seemed to be forty, the stout and portly citizen as fresh as a yokel, whose brisk bearing it was a pleasure to notice in the street, and whose smile seemed

* More succinctly, plush; though there was probably less cotton and more wool than in what is called plush to-day.

somehow that of a young fellow, shy and gawky, now had the appearance of a man verging towards eighty, comatose, wavering, lack-lustre. The bright blue of his eyes had faded to a dull grey, and they watered no more; but the red, inflamed rims seemed to weep tears of blood. In some, the sight of him awoke disgust; in others, pity. The medical students, having worried him for a long time without getting any clue to his condition or history, now pointed to the drooping underlip and the sharp facial angle, and declared that he had a cretinic taint. One evening Madame Vauquer affected to rally him after dinner.

"So they don't come to see you now, those daughters of yours," she said, meaning to express her doubt as to his paternal relationship to the girls. The old man quivered as though she had driven a knife into his flesh.

"They come sometimes," he said, with emotion.

"Ha, ha! so you still see them sometimes," cried the students. "Bravo, Père Goriot!"

But the old man did not hear the little jests called forth by his answer. He had sunk again into the state of meditation which those who studied him with such superficial natures took to be the senile torpor due to his lack of intelligence. If they had really known, perhaps they would have been deeply enough interested in the problem of his condition, mental and physical. But it could hardly be. It would have been easy, indeed, to learn whether Goriot had really been a vermicelli-maker, and what his fortune amounted to. But the older boarders, whose curiosity was exercised about his case, never went outside the Quarter, and lived in

their boarding-house as the oyster clings to its rock; while the younger members of the group were so absorbed in the whirl of Parisian life, that when they turned out of the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, they dropped all recollection of the poor old man on whom they exercised their wit at dinner. To the narrow-mindedness of the aged, as to the thoughtlessness of the young, the arid poverty of Père Goriot and his dull endurance of insult, seemed to exclude the idea that he had any fortune or any mental qualities whatever. As to the women whom he called his daughters, everybody shared the opinion of Madame Vauquer. That lady—with the severe logical faculty which old women acquire by the habit of supposing all kinds of things, and spending their whole evenings in cackle about other people—that lady would say:

"If Père Goriot had daughters as rich as all those ladies who have been to see him appear to be, he would not be living in my house, on the third floor, and at forty-five francs a month; and he would not go about dressed like a beggar."

The inference was unassailable. So about the end of November, 1819—the date at which the proper action of this drama begins—everybody in the boarding-house had arrived at quite definite ideas regarding the poor old fellow. Firstly, he had never had either daughter or wife; secondly, the abuse of pleasure had reduced him to his present snail-like sluggishness; he was, in fact, a sort of human mollusc who—thus spoke one of the day boarders, an assistant in the Natural History Museum—belonged to the subdivision known as the cloth-cap*iferæ*. Even Poiret was an eagle, a gentleman compared to Goriot. Poiret spoke, he reasoned, he answered

you. It is true that when he spoke he said nothing, whether in reasoning or answering you, for he always repeated in other words what the other person had just said. But he lent a hand in conversation, he was alive, he had some sort of feeling: whereas Goriot, said the Museum assistant, was always at Réaumer's zero.

At this time Eugène de Rastignac had just returned to Paris in a state of mind which has been felt by every young man of talent and, indeed, by all those to whom a difficult position has imparted for an hour some of the qualities of the ruling race of men. During his first year in Paris the small amount of work required for the early stages in the curriculum had left him free to taste the more obvious and material enjoyments of the great city. And a student must be no sluggard in this, he must make the most of his time, for he has much to do. There is the repertoire of every theatre to be studied; the ways and by-ways of the vast labyrinth to be explored, the customs of the people to be observed, all their languages to be learned, their pleasures to be spied out; in every locality, good or bad, he must make himself at home—and all this while he must follow the courses of lectures which he finds most attractive, and make an inventory of the treasures in the Museums and Galleries. In this period of his a student will have enthusiasms, he will find impressiveness and finality in things, modes, ideas, as silly as you like. He will entertain sentiments of hero-worship for some Professor in the College de France, paid by the Government for keeping himself always at the level of his auditory. He will adjust his necktie and pose himself for the benefit of a woman—the kind that you see in first galleries

of the Opera Comique. But in the course of these successive initiations he casts his slough, widens the horizon of his life, and arrives in the end at a conception of the ground-plan of society, and a knowledge of the different human strata that compose it. If he begins by admiring the carriages in the Champs Elysées on a beautiful afternoon, he proceeds in due time to the stage of envying the possessors, and measuring himself against them.

Eugène had served this apprenticeship without being aware of what was taking place within him. But when he went home for the vacation, after taking his two degrees as Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Law, the illusions of his boyhood were already gone, and gone, too, were the ideas about the world that he had carried with him from the provinces, but had lost somewhere in Paris. With his mind re-formed, his ambition exalted, he stood again in the old manor, and for the first time saw how things were in the bosom of his own family. On this small estate of Rastignac they all lived: his father, his mother, his two brothers, two sisters, and an aunt whose only means consisted of one or two small annuities. The revenues of this little domain were about three thousand francs, and were subject also to the fluctuations attending industrial vine-culture. And yet he knew that from that sum, twelve hundred francs had to be withdrawn for *his* support, good year and bad year. When he now saw the habitual state of distress, which had been generously hidden from him by those who endured it; when he compared, as he could not help comparing, his own sisters (who had seemed so beautiful to him when a boy) with the womankind of Paris, in

whom he beheld realised the beauty that belongs to the creatures of a dream; when he considered how precarious was the future of this large family of his, all its members putting their trust in him; when he noticed the parsimonious care lest a crumb be wasted, and that the wine for their own table was from the second pressing of the grapes—when these and a crowd of signs, too many for rehearsal here, all came home to his heart, he suddenly thirsted for distinction as never before, and the desire to succeed, to arrive, grew in him tenfold. Like all proud spirits he wished that he should rise, but rise by merit only. Nevertheless his nature was unmistakably meridional. When he had to carry his resolutions into action he was beset by the hesitations which seize upon the very young when they find themselves in mid-sea, and do not know in what direction to pull or at what angle to set their sails. His first impulse was to throw himself headlong into his work. But the need to create for himself a social connection soon enticed him into other ways. He remarked how great was the influence which women exercise in social life, and he suddenly resolved to throw himself upon that world and see if he could not find protectresses there. And surely this quest ought not to be a hopeless one to a young man with warm feelings and good wits, the effect of whose ardour and whose wits were further enhanced by a graceful figure and that kind of vigorous beauty to which women will capitulate without a struggle. Those ideas came to him in the midst of the fields, during one of those walks with his sisters that were once so delightful: the girls thought he was much changed. His aunt, Madame de Marcillac, had

been presented at Court in olden days, and had there enjoyed the acquaintance of those who were the pink and the pinnacle of aristocracy. The young man's ambition now caused him suddenly to recognise that those early recollections with which his aunt had bored him so often, contained the elements of social successes quite as important as the successes for which he was qualifying himself in the Faculty of Law. He began to ask his aunt whether some of these ties of relationship might not still be renewed. The old lady set herself to shake every branch of the genealogical tree and then opined that of all the people who might have it in their power to further her nephew's interests with the selfish tribe of rich relations, the Vicomtesse de Beauséant was the least likely to refuse. She wrote her a letter in the phraseology of her own youth and forwarded it to Eugène, telling him that if he made a favourable impression upon the Vicomtesse, no doubt the Vicomtesse would help him to find his other relations. Eugène sent his aunt's letter to Madame de Beauséant some days after his return to Paris. In reply, the Vicomtesse invited him to a ball for the following evening.

Such, then, was the state of affairs at the Maison Vauquer at the end of November, 1819.

A few days later, after he had been to Madame de Beauséant's ball, Eugène entered the house about two hours past midnight. During the dance, the brave student had mentally declared that he would work till morning, so as to retrieve the time thus lost to his studies. This should be his first vigil in the heart of that silent Quarter—for lo! he was under the spell of a factitious energy, and was thrilled by the

splendour of the world which he had just seen. He had not dined with Madame Vauquer that time. The boarders might think, if they would, that he was going to come home from the ball at daybreak as he had sometimes come from festivities at the Prado or balls at the Odeon, with his silk stockings mud-stained and his pumps ruined.

As it happened, Christophe opened the door to take a look down the street before drawing the bolts for the night. Rastignac came along at this moment and so was able to mount to his room without having made any noise, followed by Christophe who made a great deal. Eugène took off his evening dress, put on slippers and an old coat, lit his fire of briquets and swiftly got himself ready for work. All this time, the faint sounds of these preparations were entirely covered by the tramp of Christophe's heavy shoes in the room above.

Eugène surrendered himself to reverie for a few minutes before plunging into his law books. He had just learned that the Vicomtesse de Beauséant was one of the queens of fashion in Paris, and that her house was considered the most pleasant one in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. And besides this, both her name and her fortune entitled her to rank in the highest of the aristocratic world. Thanks to his aunt, Madame de Marcillac, he, a poor student, had been received into that house, though he did not even know the extent of the favour. To be admitted to these gilded salons was equivalent to a patent of nobility. His appearance in that society, the most exclusive circle in Paris, gave him the right to go everywhere in future. Dazzled at first by the brilliant gathering, Eugène had

barely exchanged a few words with his hostess. It was enough that he had already singled out from among all the Parisian goddesses with whom the rooms was thronged, *one* woman whom any young man could not choose but worship at a look!

The Comtesse Anastasie de Restaud was tall and well formed and was considered to have one of the prettiest figures in Paris. Picture to yourself large black eyes, a hand magnificently moulded, a shapely foot, an ardour in every movement—a woman whom the Marquis de Ronquerolles called "a thoroughbred." Yet this intense organisation brought with it no sacrifice: everywhere contours full and round, but nowhere that excess of full and round that they call *embonpoint*. "A thoroughbred," "a woman of race": these formulas were then beginning to take the place of the heavenly angels, the Ossianic figures, and the whole ancient mythology of love, newly spurned by dandyism. But, for Rastignac, Madame Anastasie de Restaud was simply the woman of his desire. He contrived to have his name twice in the list of partners written on her fan, and had managed to speak to her a little during the first quadrille.

"Where shall I meet you again, Madame?" he had asked her abruptly, with that passionate assurance which women like so well.

"Why," she replied, "in the Bois, at the Bouffons, at my house—everywhere."

The enterprising Southerner was at pains to establish a good understanding with this delightful Comtesse, as far as a young man can establish a good understanding with a women in the course of one quadrille and a waltz. When he told her that he was a cousin of Madame de Beauséant,

the Comtesse, whom he took to be a grande dame, invited him to call upon her; and she gave him such a smile at parting that Rastignac felt that he must certainly call. After this he had the good fortune to fall into conversation with a man who did not make fun of his ignorance of the fashionable world, that fatal disqualification in the eyes of the illustrious impertinents of those days. Your Maulincourts, your Ronquerolles, your Maxime de Trailles, your de Marsays, Ajuda-Pintos, and Vandenesses, who were there in all the splendour of their self-importance, mingling with ladies of the greatest elegance—Lady Brandon, the Duchesse de Langeais, the Comtesse de Kergarouët, Madame de Sérizy, the Duchesse de Carigliano, the Comtesse Ferraud, Madame de Lanty, the Marquise d'Aiglemont, Madame Firmiani, the Marquise de Listomère, and the Marquise d'Espard, the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, and the Grandlieus. Very fortunate it was, then, that the inexperienced student fell into the hands of the Marquis de Montriveau, the lover of the Duchesse de Langeais, a general, and as simple as a child. From him he learned that the Comtesse de Restaud lived in the Rue Helder. Ah, what a moment in a life was this—to be young, to be athirst for the world, to hunger for the love of a woman, and behold, the doors of two such houses thrown open to you! To set foot in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, under the roof of the Vicomtesse de Beauséant, to make your bow in the Chaussée d'Antin to the Comtesse de Restaud—to send one glance down the long vista of Parisian salons, and know that you were still nice boy enough to be sure of finding the protection you need in the heart of some woman there—to have such ambition and

such confidence that you plant your foot with splendid scorn on the tight-rope along which you must pass to your goal, and to have to aid you from the first step the best of all balancing poles, a charming woman. . . With such thoughts as these, and with the vision of such a woman rising sublimely amid the smoke of a slow-kindling fire, with the Code on one side and Poverty on the other, who would not have done as Eugène did then, sounding the future in the depths of his meditation, enriching it with all the garnishings of success? His vagrant fancy was discounting the joys in store for him at such a brisk pace that he was finding himself already in the presence of Madame de Restaud when——the stillness of the night was broken by a sigh so deep, so heavy and expiring that the young man's heart stopped beating: it seemed like the last rattle in a dying man's throat. He opened his door gently, and stepped into the lobby. There was a streak of light along by the foot of Père Goriot's door. Fearing that his neighbour might be unwell, he peered through the keyhole into the room: and the work on which he now found Père Goriot engaged had so much the appearance of being associated with crime that the young man at once felt that he was fully justified—was, indeed, rendering a service to society—in taking good note of the midnight contrivances of the so-called vermicelli-merchant. The table was turned on its side, and Goriot had obviously tied to the cross-bar a silver-gilt tray and a small bowl, and then, having passed a sort of cable round them, had wrung and crushed them with such immense force as almost to have converted them into twisted ingots.

"Ye Gods, what a man!" muttered Rastignac, watching the muscular arms at work, while the

old man, with no other aid than this rope, was noiselessly kneading the chased silver like a piece of dough. Was he, then, a thief, or a receiver of stolen goods, carrying on his business with the security given him by a cunning simulation of stupidity, impotence, and almost mendicancy? Eugène stood erect for a few moments, thinking such thoughts as these; then he looked again into the room.

Père Goriot had now unwound the rope. Spreading his blanket on the table, he now took the mass of silver and rolled it to and fro till he had rounded it into a solid bar. This operation he achieved with the most extraordinary ease.

"He must have the strength of Augustus, King of Poland," said Eugène to himself, when the bar was almost rounded and ready.

Père Goriot looked sadly at his workmanship, and tears came to his eyes. He blew out the dip, by the light of which he had manipulated the silver. Eugène heard him sigh as he got into bed.

"He is mad," thought the student.

"*Poor child!*" said Père Goriot, aloud.

On account of this one word, Rastignac decided that he had better say nothing about what he had seen, and also that he ought not to condemn his neighbour too hastily. He was about to re-enter his own room when he suddenly became aware of a sound, difficult to describe: it might have been produced by persons ascending the staircase in list slippers. Listening with all his might, he was able to distinguish the alternate breathing of two men. He had not heard the street door open nor the sound of footsteps, yet a faint light suddenly appeared on the second landing, where M. Vautrin lived.

"A good many mysteries, here, for a respectable boarding-house!" he said to himself.

He descended a few steps and listened. The chink of gold reached his ears. Immediately afterwards the light was extinguished, and again he could hear distinctly the alternate breathings of two men, but no sound of a door being opened. The breathing grew fainter as the two men descended.

"Who is that?" cried Madame Vauquer, opening the window of her room.

"It is I, mamma, just come home," said Vautrin, in his deep voice.

"That's queer, seeing that Christophe bolted the door," said Eugène to himself, as he went back to his room. "Well, if you want to know what goes on around you in Paris, you must keep awake all night, it seems."

These little events had quite drawn him away from his dreams of love and ambition. He sat down to work. Distracted, however, by his new suspicions regarding Père Goriot—still more distracted by the vision of Madame de Restaud, who appeared before his mind's eye from moment to moment, as a herald announcing to him a brilliant career—he ended by going to bed, and falling asleep with clenched fists. Of every ten nights which youth bravely pre-devotes to hard study, seven are sacrificed to sleep. One must be more than twenty years to keep awake o' nights.

On the following morning there reigned over Paris one of those thick fogs, which envelop the city in such a coat of darkness that the most punctual people mistake the time, and will tell themselves it is eight o'clock when they are wakened by the mid-day chimes; whereby busi-

ness appointments are badly kept all that day. At half-past nine Madame Vauquer had not budged out of bed. Christophe and fat Sylvie, who had also risen late, were taking their morning coffee at great leisure. This coffee of theirs was made with the rich skimmings from the milk-bowls of all the boarders, and the milk had thereafter been boiled, so that Madame Vauquer should not detect this illegal levy.

"Sylvie," said Christophe, soaking his toast in his coffee, "M. Vautrin, who is not a bad sort, you know, had two people to see him last night again. If you hear Madame worrying, you will say nothing."

"Did he give you anything?"

"He gave me five francs this month: as much as to say *hold your peace.*"

"He and Madame Couture are not so stingy," said Sylvie. "But the others would take back with the left hand what they gave you with the right."

"And what *do* they give?" said Christophe. "A paltry five francs a year. There's old Goriot has done his own boots for the last two years; and that miserly Poiret does without blacking altogether. As for that student fellow, he gives me forty sous. Forty sous don't pay for my brushes. And he sells his old clothes—for more than they're worth, too. What a hole!"

"Bah!" said fat Sylvie, while she slowly sipped her coffee. "Our places are the best in the Quarter, for all that. You can see it for yourself. But, talking of grandpapa Vautrin, Christophe, has anybody spoken to you about him?"

"Yes; I met a gentleman in the street some days ago, who said to me: 'Doesn't there live in your house a stout party with dyed whis-

kers?' Well, I said, 'No, sir; he does not dye them. A gay fellow like him can't spare the time.' I told M. Vautrin, and he said: 'You did quite right, my lad: always answer them like that. Nothing is more unpleasant than to have one's weakness made known to everybody. Many a good match might be spoiled by that.'"

"Well, now, when I was marketing, if they didn't try to get out of me whether I had ever seen him put on his shirt. What an idea!. . . Hullo!" she said, stopping to listen, "there goes a quarter to ten by the Val de Grâce, and nobody stirring."

"Pooh! They've all gone out. Madame Couture and the girl have gone to sacrament at St. Etienne—they've been away since eight o'clock. Père Goriot went off carrying a parcel. The student doesn't return till his lectures are over at ten. I was doing the stairs when they went out, and Père Goriot gave me a knock with the parcel he carried—it was as hard as iron. I wonder, now, what is *that* old boy up to? The others badger him about as if he was a whipping-top. But he is a good man all the same, and is worth more to me than the lot of them. He doesn't give much; but the ladies he sends me to on errands sometimes—*they* fork out the splendid tips. And they wear mighty pretty things, too."

"The girls he calls his daughters, you mean? There are a dozen of them."

"I have only been to two; the ones who called here."

"There is Madame moving. Won't she make a rumpus! I must be off. Look after the milk, Christophe—and the cat." Sylvie went upstairs to her mistress.

"What's the meaning of this, Sylvie? A quar-

ter to ten gone, and you allow me to sleep like a marmot! I never knew such a thing."

"It's the fog: you could cut it with a knife."

"But what about breakfast?"

"Bah! the devil's got into your boarders. They were all up with the bilk, this morning."

"Don't use such expressions, Sylvie. You should say—up with the milk."

"Ah, madame, I shall say whatever you like. Anyhow, ten o'clock will do for breakfast. Michonnette and Poiret haven't budged yet. They're the only ones in the house just now, and they're sleeping like logs of wood, as they are."

"Why, Sylvie, you are mixing up the two as if—"

"As if what?" said Sylvie, with a loud, coarse laugh. "Two make a pair."

"Isn't it odd, Sylvie, how M. Vautrin got into the house last night after Christophe had shot the bolts?"

"Not a bit, madame. He heard M. Vautrin, and came down to let him in. And there's you beginning to imagine——"

"Hand me my bodice, and go and see to breakfast at once. Serve the remainder of the mutton, and give them some stewed pears—those at four a penny."

A few seconds later, Madame Vauquer came downstairs to find the cat finishing a hurried breakfast, which he had secured by tipping the plate from the top of one of the milk-bowls.

"Mistigris!" she exclaimed.

The cat sprang away, but returned to rub herself against her mistress's skirts.

"Oh, yes, come sneaking round, you miserable wretch," she said. "Sylvie, Sylvie!"

"Yes, madame; what's the matter?"

"See here; the cat has been drinking this milk."

"Ah, it's all the fault of that fool of a Christophe. I told him to cover it. Where has he got to now? Don't you worry, madame. This will do for Père Goriot's coffee. I'll put some water to it, and he will be none the wiser. He notices nothing, not even what he eats."

"Where on earth can *that* heathen creature have gone to?" said Madame Vauquer, beginning to lay the table.

"Who can tell? He is up to some infernal tricks, you may be sure."

"I have slept too long," said Madame Vauquer.

"But then Madame is as fresh as a rose for it."

The door-bell rang at this instant, and Vautrin entered through the drawing-room, singing in his deep bass voice:

"*I've travelled the world, both up and down,*
And this has always been my way—"

"Ho-ho! Good morning, mamma!" he cried, when he caught sight of his hostess. He also gallantly caught her in his arms.

"Be off! Stop your——"

"Say 'impertinence!'" he cried. "Come, say it! Don't you want to say it, eh?. . Now, see me help you lay the table. Oh, I'm a very nice man, am I not?"

"*To court the blonde and kiss the brown,*
To love, to sigh . . . . ."

and I've just seen the strangest thing.

"*. . . . . sing ho! the day.*"

"Seen what?" asked the widow.

"At half-past eight this morning Père Goriot was in the shop of the goldsmith in the Rue

Dauphine, who buys old lace, and forks, and spoons, and such-like. He sold to this goldsmith a large silver dish of some sort, which was twisted out of shape in a way very creditable to one who is not in the business."

"What—really?"

"Yes. I was coming home after having seen off a friend of mine, who is leaving his country by one of the Royal Mail Fast Sailers. After the Rue Dauphine, I attended Père Goriot—to see what would follow. Something funny, I was sure. He came back to this Quarter, and turned into the Rue des Grès, where he entered the house of a noted moneylender called Gobseck. A hot customer, he is, this Gobseck, and would make dominoes out of his father's bones: a Jew, an Arab, a Greek, a Bohemian, whom it would puzzle you to take the lining out of, anyhow. He puts every coin in the bank."

"Then what was Père Goriot doing there?"

"He was doing nothing: he was undoing. The imbecile is weak enough to ruin himself for love of girls who——"

"Here he is," said Sylvie.

"Christophe!" cried Père Goriot, "come upstairs with me."

Christophe followed Père Goriot, and returned immediately.

"Where are you going?" said Madame Vauquer to her domestic.

"On an errand for M. Goriot."

"What's this?" said Vautrin, as he snatched a letter from Christophe's hand. He read the address: "*To Madame la Comtesse Anastasie de Restaud.*" And you go to—" he said, handing back the letter, "to—"

"The Rue du Helder. I am not to give this

into the hands of anybody except Madame la Comtesse."

"What's in it?" said Vautrin, taking the letter again and holding it to the light. "A bank note? No." He opened the envelope a little way. "A discharged bill!" he cried. "My word, a gallant dotard, if you like!—Be off, you old Lascar," he said, clapping his great hand down on Christophe's head and making him spin round like a thimble, "you will get a good tip for this."

The table was now laid. Sylvie was boiling the milk, and Madame Vauquer was lighting a fire in the stove, assisted by Vautrin, who all the while kept humming:

"*I've travelled the world, both up and down,*
And this has always been my way . . ."

When these preparations were complete, Madame Couture and Mlle. Taillefer came in.

"Where have you been this morning, my lady fair!" said Madame Vauquer to Madame Couture.

"We have been to say our prayers at Saint-Etienne du Mont. For this is the day, you know, when we must visit M. Taillefer. Poor little thing, she trembles like a leaf," replied Madame Couture as she seated herself before the fire and held her wet shoes up to the blaze until they steamed again.

"Come and warm yourself, Victorine," said Madame Vauquer.

"It is good, mademoiselle, to pray to God to soften your father's heart," said Vautrin, drawing his chair closer to that of the orphan. "But that is not enough. You need a friend who would make it his business to speak his mind

to this monster of a father—a savage who, they say, has three millions, and yet won't even give you a dowry. In these times every pretty girl needs a dowry."

"Poor child!" said Madame Vauquer. "Never mind, my pet; your inhuman father is drawing down plenty of misfortunes on his own head."

At these words Victorine's eyes filled with tears, and at a sign from Madame Couture the landlady lapsed into silence.

"If we could only see him, if I could get to speak to him, to lay before him his wife's last letter," continued the widow of the Commissary-General. "I have never dared to risk it through the post. He knows my writing, and . . ."

"*Oh hapless ladies, innocent and wronged!*"

broke in Vautrin. "So that is the difficulty, is it? Well, a few days hence I shall interest myself in your affairs, and all will go smoothly."

"Oh sir!" said Victorine turning upon Vautrin a look at once warm and humid, which did not disarrange him in the least, "if you have any way of getting to see my father, assure him that his love and the honour of my mother are more precious to me than all the riches in the world. If you can persuade him to be only a little less stern in his thoughts of me, I shall pray to God for you. You may be sure of my gratitude . . ."

"*I've travelled the world, both up and down,*"

sang Vautrin, in a mocking voice.

At this moment Goriot, Mademoiselle Michonneau, and Poiret came downstairs, perhaps drawn by the smell of the brown butter sauce, which

Sylvie was making to serve with the "remainder of the mutton." As the seven boarders placed themselves at the table after exchanging morning greetings, the clock struck ten, and the student's footstep was heard in the street.

"Well, Monsieur Eugène," said Sylvie, "you are going to have breakfast with the whole family to-day."

The student said good morning to the company and sat down beside Père Goriot.

"I have just had a very strange adventure," he said, as he served himself plentifully to the mutton, and cut a slice of bread which was accurately measured, as usual, by the eye of Madame Vauquer.

"An adventure!" said Poiret.

"Well, and why should you be astonished at that, old chap!" said Vautrin to him, "Monsieur is good-looking enough to have adventures."

Mademoiselle Taillefer stole a timid glance towards the young student.

"Tell us your adventure," demanded Madame Vauquer.

"I was at a ball last night given by the Vicomtesse de Beauséant, a cousin of mine, who has a magnificent house, with rooms draped with silk, so you may know that it was a superb affair, and that I enjoyed myself like a king . . ."

"Fisher," said Vautrin cutting him short.

"Sir," replied Eugène with some vehemence, "what do you mean to say."

"I say *fisher*, because kingfishers enjoy themselves much more than kings."

"That's true; I would rather be that careless little bird than a king, because . . ." said Poiret, the *idemist*.

"Well," continued the student, disregarding

Poiret, "I danced with one of the most beautiful women at the ball, a ravishing Comtesse, the most delicious creature I have ever seen. She had peach blossoms in her hair, and carried the most lovely bouquet of flowers, natural flowers which embalmed the air—bah! you would need to have seen her to understand; for a woman animated by the dance cannot be described. Well then, I met this same divine Comtesse this morning, about nine o'clock, on foot, in the Rue des Grès. My heart beat fast, wildly; I began to think . . ."

"That she was coming here," said Vautrin, fixing a penetrating look on the student. "No doubt she was going to call on Papa Gobseck, a usurer. If ever you search the hearts of the women of Paris, you will find the Usurer first and the Lover afterwards! Your Comtesse is called Anastasie de Restaud, and lives in the Rue du Helder."

On hearing this name the student stared at Vautrin. Père Goriot quickly raised his head and cast upon the two speakers a look so luminous and full of trouble that the boarders were struck with surprise.

"Christophe won't arrive in time, and she will have gone to him!" he exclaimed mournfully.

"I guessed as much," said Vautrin, leaning over to whisper in Madame Vauquer's ear.

Goriot ate on mechanically without knowing what he ate. He had never seemed more stupid or sunken into himself than at this moment.

"Who the deuce told *you* her name, M. Vautrin?" said Eugène.

"Ha-ha!" he answered. "Just look and see! Père Goriot knows it, that's certain. Why then should not I know it?"

"M. Goriot!" cried the student.

"What?" said the poor old man. "So she was very beautiful last night, was she?"

"Who?"

"Madame de Restaud."

"Just look at the old wretch," said Madame Vauquer to Vautrin. "How his eyes sparkle!"

"Does he really keep her, then?" said Mademoiselle Michonneau, in a whisper to the student.

"Oh, yes; she was tremendously beautiful," answered Eugène. Père Goriot kept looking at him eagerly while he spoke. "If Madame de Beauséant had not been there, my divine Comtesse would have been the queen of the ball. The young men had eyes for nobody but her —*I* was the twelfth on her dance-list. She danced in all the quadrilles, and the other women were beside themselves. If there was a happy being in the world last night, it was certainly she. It is a true saying, indeed, that there is no more beautiful sight than a ship under full sail, a galloping horse, or a woman dancing."

"So it goes on," said Vautrin—"last night at the top of the wheel, in the house of a Duchesse; this morning at the foot of the ladder, in the house of a money-lender. There you have the women of Paris. If their husbands can't pay for their unbridled luxuriousness, they sell themselves. If they don't know how to sell themselves, they will disembowel their own mothers for the means of shining a little longer. Yes, they've a hundred thousand tricks—I know them, I know them!"

At this harsh speech of Vautrin's, Père Goriot's countenance, which had shone like the sun on a

bright day while he listened to the student, became clouded and dull again.

"But," said Madame Vauquer, "what of your adventure? Did you speak to her—did you ask her if she wanted legal advice?"

"She did not see me," said Eugène. "But to think of meeting one of the prettiest women in Paris, at nine o'clock, in the Rue des Grès, knowing that she can't have returned from the ball before two—isn't that odd enough? It's only in Paris you meet such things."

"Bah! there are heaps of things that happen here, much queerer than that," said Vautrin.

Mademoiselle Taillefer had scarcely heard what was said, so preoccupied was she with the enterprise in front of her. Madame Couture signed to her that it was time to come away and dress. When the two ladies had left the room, Père Goriot followed.

"Well, did you see that?" said Madame Vauquer to Vautrin and the others. "He is ruining himself on account of those women, that is evident."

"Nobody will make me believe," said Eugène, "that the beautiful Comtesse de Restaud stands in any relation to Père Goriot."

"We are not at all concerned to make you believe it," said Vautrin, interrupting him. "You are too young yet to know Paris very well. By-and-bye you will begin to see that since there are in the world what we call *men with a Passion*—"

At these words Mademoiselle Michonneau regarded Vautrin with a quick look of comprehension: it was like a discarded cavalry horse pricking his ears at the sound of a bugle. Vautrin stopped a moment, and looked at her keenly.

"Ha-ha!" said he, "so we have had our own little passions, have we?" Then he continued:

"Well, then," he said, "those men get hold of an idea, and never quit it again. They have a thirst, but it is for the water of one spring only; and often it is stagnant water. To drink of this, they will sell their wives, their children; they will sell even their own souls to the Devil. For some men, this spring of water is the gaming-table, or the Stock Exchange, or a collection of pictures, or of insects, or it is music: for others, it is one woman who can make the dainties that their palate likes. Now you might offer these last all the women in the world, and they would think nothing of them. They want only the *one* by whom their passion can be satisfied. Often enough this woman does not care for them at all, will behave brutally to them, will sell them crumbs of satisfaction at a heavy ransom. Nevertheless, those precious lovers don't get tired of it, but will take their last blanket to the pawnshop to bring her their last five-franc piece. Père Goriot is one of that kind. This Comtesse can exploit him, because he will never tell: and there is Fashionable Life for you! The poor man has not a thought but of her. Apart from his one passion, he is as unintelligent as the beasts. But turn him on to that, and his eyes sparkle like a diamond. The riddle is easily read. This morning he took some plate to the melting-pot, and I myself saw him enter the house of old Gobseck in the Rue des Grès. Now, mark what follows! He comes back here, and sends that donkey Christophe with a letter, which the donkey shows to us. It is addressed to the Comtesse de Restaud, and it contains a discharged bill. Now, since the Comtesse went herself to

the bill-broker, you may take it that the case was urgent. Père Goriot, like a gallant man, has settled the transaction for her—and so, without putting two thoughts together, you can tell the whole story. Which may show you, my young friend," he said, addressing the student, "that while your Comtesse smiled, and danced, and made pretty faces, and balanced those peach-blossoms on her head, and gathered her skirts about her—yet all the while her shoes were pinching her very hard, as the saying goes, when she thought of her protested bills, or those of her lover."

"You make me mighty curious to know the truth!" exclaimed Eugène. "I shall call on Madame de Restaud to-morrow."

"Yes," said Poiret, "you must call on Madame de Restaud to-morrow."

"And perhaps you will meet there the worthy Goriot, fresh from receiving the equivalent of his kindness."

"But if this be so," said Eugène, with disgust, "your Paris is a *slough!*"

"And a mighty queer slough, too," answered Vautrin. "Those who get mud-splashed by driving in a carriage, are respectable people; those who get splashed travelling a-foot, are marked for rogues. Just have the ill-luck to remove a hat—anything you like—off its peg, and you will be put on view in the Palais-de-Justice as an abnormality. Steal a million of money, and you will be pointed out in every *salon* as a personification of virtue. And it is to keep this morality going that you expend thirty millions a-year on the Courts of Justice and the Police. It is lovely!"

"Do you mean to say," said Madame Vauquer,

"that Père Goriot has melted down his silver-gilt breakfast-service?"

"Were there two turtle-doves on the cover?" asked Eugène.

"That is right."

"He must have attached great value to it, then; for he wept as he crushed it, cup and tray. I chanced to see him, by accident," said Eugène.

"He valued it as his own life," said the widow.

"There you are!" cried Vautrin; "just see what passion does with *this* good man! That woman can touch his soul with the point of her finger!"

The student went to his room. Vautrin went out. A little afterwards, Madame Couture and Victorine drove off in a cab which Sylvie had brought for them. Poiret offered his arm to Mademoiselle Michonneau, and these two went off to take a walk in the Jardin des Plantes during the two best hours of the day.

"Well, they're as good as married at last!" said fat Sylvie. "They've gone out together to-day for the first time. They are such a couple of dry sticks that if they knock against one another they will send forth a spark, like a flint and steel."

"Keep clear of Mademoiselle Michonneau's shawl," said Madame Vauquer, laughing; "it will catch like tinder!"

At four o'clock in the afternoon, Goriot re-entered the salon. By the light of the two smoky lamps, he saw Victorine sitting with red eyelids, while Madame Vauquer listened to the tale of the fruitless visit made to M. Taillefer that forenoon. Tired of the applications made by his daughter

and this old woman, it appeared that Taillefer had admitted them into his presence at last in order to let them know his mind.

"My dear lady, would you believe it," Madame Couture was saying to Madame Vauquer, "that he did not even ask Victorine to sit down, so that she stood during the whole interview! Addressing himself to me, he said, quite coldly and without the least bit of anger, that we must spare ourselves the trouble of calling on him: that Mademoiselle—he did not say his *daughter*—only damaged herself in his regard by her importunities (once a year, the inhuman beast!): that since Victorine's mother had no fortune when he married her, Victorine had nothing to claim from him—in fact, a number of the cruellest things he said, which caused this poor child to burst into tears. The poor dear then threw herself at her father's feet and said bravely that she only persevered so for her mother's sake; and that she would gladly obey all his wishes; only she would beseech him to read the last message of the poor dead lady. She took the letter and gave it him, saying all the time the most beautiful things you ever heard, and full of the most tender emotion, such that I do not know where she can have found them. But indeed God instructed her, for the poor child was so inspired that to hear her talk, it made me cry like a fool. And do you know what this horrible man did all the while? He pared his nails! He took the letter that Madame Couture had stained with her tears, and threw it on the fire, saying, '*That's* all right!' He was about to raise his daughter, but when she seized his hands to kiss them, he drew them away. Is it not a crime and a shame? His

big booby of a son came in, and never even bowed to his sister."

"But surely these are not human creatures!" said Père Goriot.

"And then," said Madame Couture, paying no attention to the old man's exclamation, "father and son left the room. They bowed to me, and begged me to excuse them, as they had pressing matters to attend to. So that was our visit. At any rate, he has seen his daughter—and I do not know how he can disown her, for she is as like him as one drop of water is to another."

The boarders (including the *externes*, or those who dined at Madame Vauquer's table, but did not live in the house) now began to drop in one by one, and exchanged greetings. They also exchanged a great many of those verbal nothings that pass, among a certain class of Parisians, for the tokens of a spirit of drollery—observations, of which stupidity is the backbone, and whose charm depends on a gesture or a freak in pronunciation. This kind of argot is always changing. There is always a conventional principle in the prevailing form of jest, and this principle seldom lasts a month. It may refer to an occurrence in political life, or a case in the Police Courts, or a street song, or the gag of a comedian—anything will serve to keep going this game of wit that consists in playing at battledore and shuttlecock with the words and ideas that happen to be in the air. At the date of which we write, the Diorama, in which optical illusion was carried a stage further than in the Panorama, had just been invented, and the studios of Paris had accordingly set the fashion of talking of everything in terms of *rama*. The fashion, or the in-

fection, had been brought to the Maison Vauquer by a young painter who dined there.

"Well, *Monsieurrre* Poiret," said the official from the Museum, "how is your *healthorama?*" Then, without waiting for Poiret's reply, "Ladies," he said to Madame Couture and Victorine, "you look sad!"

"Are we going to *dine-a?*" cried Horace Bianchon, a medical student, and friend of Rastignac; "my little stomach sinks *usque ad talones.*"

"It's a rare old frizz*orama!*" said Vautrin. "Now then, Père Goriot, move round a bit—Ye gods! your feet stop up the mouth of the stove."

"Illustrious Monsieur Vautrin," said Bianchon, "why do you say friz*zorama?* It is a mistake: you should say free*zorama.*"

"No!" interposed the Museum official. "It is frizzorama: according to the rule *my feet are frizzen.*"

"Ha, ha!"

"Here is his Excellency the Marquis of Rastignac, Doctor of Right-About!" cried Bianchon, seizing Eugène by the neck, as if to strangle him. "Hi there! help! help!"

Mademoiselle Michonneau entered quietly, bowed to the company without speaking, and went and sat beside the other three women.

"That old bat always makes me shiver," said Bianchon to Vautrin, indicating Mademoiselle Michonneau. "I have studied the system of Gall, and I find she has the bumps of Judas."

"Have you known Judas?" asked Vautrin.

"Who hasn't known him?" answered Bianchon. "Upon my word, that white-faced old maid affects me like one of those long worms

which will gnaw their way through the length of a beam, if you give them time enough!"

"That is it," said the man of forty, drawing a comb through his whiskers—

"*And Rose, she has lived the life of a rose—*
One morning, and no more."

"Ha-ha! here is a rare old soupe-*orama*," said Poiret, as Christophe entered with the tureen, looking very respectful.

"Excuse me, monsieur," said Madame Vauquer, "it is a *soupe-aux-choux* (cabbage soup)."

All the young men burst into laughter.

"Done, Poiret!"

"Poirrrrette is done-a!"

"Mark two points to Mamma Vauquer," said Vautrin.

"Did anybody notice the fog this morning?" said the employé.

"It was, indeed," said Bianchon, "a fog frantic and unparalleled, a fog doleful, melancholic, green, and broken-winded, a Goriot fog."

"A Goriorama," said the painter; "for you could see nothing in it."

"Hi! Milord Gâôriotte, they're a-talkin' uv you-a!"

Père Goriot was seated at the lower end of the table near the door through which the servant brought the food. He raised his head, and at the same moment sniffed at a piece of bread which he lifted from beside his dinner napkin: an old trick, acquired in his business, which sometimes re-appeared.

"Well?" cried Madame Vauquer, snappishly, in a voice that rose above the clatter of spoons and plates and the babble of voices, "isn't the bread good enough for you?"

"On the contrary, madame; it is made from flour of Etampes—flour of the best quality."

"How do you know that?" asked Eugène.

"By the whiteness, by the taste."

"By the taste of the nose, since you have to smell it," said Madame Vauquer. "You are getting so economical, that by and by you may find out a way of nourishing yourself on the vapours from the kitchen."

"Be sure you patent the invention," said the official from the Museum. "You will make a fortune out of it."

"Leave off—he only does it to make us believe that he was a vermicelli-maker," said the painter.

"Then your nose is a corn-tester?" said the man from the Museum again.

"Corn what?" asked Bianchon.

"Corn-el."

"Corn-et."

"Corn-elian."

"Corn-ice."

"Corn-ucopia."

"Corn-poppy."

"Corn-wain."

"Corn-*orama!*"

Those replies came rattling like musketry from every part of the room. They provoked the more laughter because poor Père Goriot stared at his companions with the puzzled look of a man who is trying to make out the meaning of something said to him in a foreign language.

"Corn . . . . ?" he said to Vautrin, who sat beside him.

"Corny feet, old boy!" answered Vautrin, bringing his hand down on Père Goriot's head so heavily, that he drove his hat over his eyes.

The poor old man, stupefied by this rude attack, remained motionless for some seconds. Christophe removed his plate, thinking he had finished his soup, so that when Goriot had adjusted his hat again, and began as if to sup, he only knocked his spoon against the table. There was a roar of laughter.

"Monsieur," said the old man, "you joke in bad style; and if you permit yourself again to force my hat over my eyes in that manner . . ."

"Well, and what then, daddy?" said Vautrin, interrupting him.

"Well, you will pay dearly for it some day . . ."

"In Hell, won't he?" said the painter. "In the little black corner where naughty children are put."

"Well, Mademoiselle," said Vautrin to Victorine, "you are eating nothing. So papa has shown himself perverse?"

"A horrible creature!" said Madame Couture.

"We must bring him to reason," said Vautrin.

"Why," said Rastignac, who was sitting near Bianchon, "Mademoiselle might bring a suit for aliment, for she is eating nothing. I say! just see how intently Père Goriot is looking at Mademoiselle Victorine."

The old man was forgetting his dinner, so absorbed was his contemplation of the poor girl's face, its every lineament expressive of a pure sorrow—the sorrow of a child disowned who yet loves her father.

"My dear fellow," said Eugène in a low voice, "we have been deceiving ourselves about Père Goriot. He is neither a mental imbecile, nor a man without strength. Apply your system of Gall to him, and tell me what you make of it.

Last night I saw him twist a silver dish as though it had been made of wax; and at this moment his face expresses an extraordinary degree of sentiment. It seems to me that a life so mysterious must be worth trying to understand, worth studying. Yes, you may laugh, Bianchon; but I am not joking."

"The man is a 'subject,' I grant you—in the medical sense," said Bianchon. "I am quite willing to dissect him, if he wishes it."

"No; feel his head."

"M'yes—but his stupidity might be contagious."

About three o'clock on the following day, Rastignac, in his most elegant attire, set out to call on Madame de Restaud. On the way he gave himself up to those wild and foolish anticipations which keep young hearts for ever charged with fine emotions. These make no account of obstacles or dangers; they see success in every path; they make a sort of poem of their own life; and their misfortunes or their melancholy are caused by the collapse of undertakings which have no existence, save in the world of their own reverie or desire. If youth knew more or dared less, civilised society would come to an end! As he went, Eugène picked his steps to keep himself free from mud soils. But still he kept thinking of what he should say to Madame de Restaud. He provisioned himself with stores of wit, he invented happy retorts for an imaginary conversation, he got ready his neat remarks, his phrases in the manner of Talleyrand, and mentally arranged a number of little circumstances all leading up to that Declaration on which he was to found his future—and in the meanwhile, he was a student, walking on the

pavement, who had got himself splashed. He had to have his boots polished and his trousers brushed at the Palais-Royal.

"If I were rich," he thought, as he changed the five franc piece which he had brought in case of accidents, "I should go in a cab, and would be able to think at my ease."

Arrived at the Rue du Helder, he asked for the Comtesse de Restaud, and received with the cold anger of a man who means to triumph some day, the contemptuous glance of the domestics who had seen him cross the courtyard on foot, and had heard no sound of wheels at the outer gate. This glance stung him all the more, because he had already gathered a sense of his inferiority on entering the courtyard, where a beautiful horse, richly caparisoned, was pawing the ground. It was harnessed to one of those extremely smart cabriolets, which are the visible emblems of a spendthrift and luxurious life, and suggest the whole course and custom of Parisian pleasure-seeking. This sight put the student in bad humour with himself; the compartments which he had opened in his brain and reckoned on finding packed with wit, now closed again, and he was merely stupid. While he waited the reply of the Comtesse, to whom a servant had carried his name, Eugène placed himself by a window of the ante-chamber. Standing there on one foot, and leaning his elbow against the sash, he gazed vacantly into the courtyard. The time seemed long; so long, that he would have gone away, had he not been gifted with that pertinacity of the Southern which works miracles—when it does not change its objective.

"Monsieur," said the valet de chambre, "Madame is in her boudoir. She is very busy

and did not answer me; but if you will pass into the salon, there is someone there.

Rastignac marvelled at the terrible power of those people, who can place on trial or condemn their superiors by a single word. Perhaps seized by a desire to make those lackeys comprehend that he was intimate with the people of the house, he deliberately opened the door through which the valet de chambre had come, and took a step forward—to find that he had blundered into a room filled with lamps, dressers, and an apparatus for airing bath towels; beyond which he could discern only a dimly lighted passage and a back staircase. His confusion was completed by the sounds of stifled laughter that reached him from the ante-chamber.

"This way to the salon, sir," said the valet de chambre, with that false respect in his tones that seemed one pleasantry the more at Eugène's expense.

The student retraced his steps with some precipitation; and in doing so, pitched against a bath, and was just fortunate enough to save his hat from immersion. At this moment a door opened at the end of the long passage, which was lighted by a small lamp, and Rastignac immediately heard the voice of Madame de Restaud, that of Père Goriot, and the sound of a kiss. He now followed the servant into the dining-room, and thence into the drawing room. Placing himself at the window, he found it looked on the court. He wished to see whether this Père Goriot was in real truth *his* Père Goriot. His heart beat strangely; the horrible exposition of Vautrin came back to his mind. The valet stationed himself at the door, in attendance on Eugène, and at the same instant a well-dressed

young man advanced as if to leave the room, saying with impatience:

"I am going, Maurice; tell Madame la Comtesse that I waited for her more than half an hour."

This insolent young man, who doubtless was privileged to be insolent, sang an Italian trill, and walked up to the window by which Eugène stood—quite as much to get sight of the student's face as to look into the courtyard.

"But Monsieur le Comte had better stay another moment. Madame is now disengaged," said Maurice; and he returned towards the anteroom.

At this moment Père Goriot stepped into view from the doorway of the back-staircase, which was quite near the entrance gate of the court. The old man was holding out his umbrella preparatory to opening it, and did not notice that the large gate had been opened to admit a young man with a ribbon on his coat, who was driving a tilbury. Only by stepping back very quickly did Père Goriot escape being crushed. The flapping of the umbrella had frightened the horse, which shied, and then made a quick bolt towards the front steps of the mansion. The young man looked round wrathfully, but on seeing that it was Père Goriot passing out, he bowed to him in a peculiar manner. It expressed the kind of forced consideration which one accords to a money-lender of whom one still has to make use, or that degree of social recognition that one has to give sometimes—and blushes for it afterwards—to acquaintances with a battered reputation. Père Goriot replied with a little friendly bow, and smiled good naturedly. All this happened with the speed of lightning, and

Eugène was so absorbed by it that he forgot that he was not alone. Suddenly he heard the voice of the Comtesse.

"Ah, Maxime, so you were going away?" she said in a tone of reproach, that was not free from a suspicion of pique. She had not yet noticed the entrance of the tilbury.

Turning sharply, Rastignac beheld the Comtesse. She was coquettishly dressed in a loose white cashmere gown, with knots of rose-coloured ribbons, her hair negligently put together as is the morning fashion of Parisian women. She exhaled fragrance, and had evidently come recently from the bath, with all her beauty more supple and voluptuous, and the expression of her eyes still humid. A young man's glance goes far, comprehends the mysteries; his spirit assimilates all the influences that such a woman's body radiates, as the plant gathers from the air that it grows in the food that it needs. Without having touched her hands, he felt the freshness that they shed. He was aware of warm rose tints blushing through the cashmere, and sometimes the folds falling a little open left uncovered a glimpse of recesses—his eyes were riveted. The Comtesse had no need of corsetings to enhance her beauty. A girdle alone sufficed to define her flexible form—her bare neck was an invitation to love—her feet in slippers were already as dainty as shoes could make them. When Maxime took her hand to kiss it, Eugène noticed Maxime for the first time, and the Comtesse noticed Eugène.

"Ah, it is you, Monsieur de Rastignac—I am very glad to see you," she said in a tone which a man with more social experience would have interpreted, and obeyed on the spot.

Maxime looked at Eugène and then at the

Comtesse in a way that ought to have made the intruder decamp, for it was expressive enough.

"I say, my dear—I hope you're going to send this fool of a fellow about his business?"

So might one have rendered in simple and explicit words the meaning of this haughty and insolent young man's glance, this Maxime, as the Comtesse called him. Whoever he was, the Comtesse searched his looks with that submissive solicitude which gives away the whole secret of a woman, unknown to herself. Rastignac felt a violent hatred for this young man. To begin with, the beautiful blonde locks of Maxime, so carefully tended, made him perceive how unkempt his own were. Then Maxime wore neat shoes, spotlessly clean, whereas his own, despite all the care he had taken on the way thither, were slightly mud-stained. Finally, Maxime wore a surtout, which set off his elegant figure to good advantage, and made him as shapely as a handsome woman, whereas Eugène was still wearing a black coat at half-past two. The keen-witted child of the Charente felt what superiority over him mere clothing gave to this dandy, so slender and tall, with his clear eyes, his pale face; the kind of man, he divined, who could ruin an orphan and feel no qualms.

Without waiting Eugène's reply, Madame de Restaud fled into the second salon, the skirts of her loose gown rippling and fluttering behind her in such a way as to suggest the progress of a butterfly from the one room to the other. Maxime followed her; and Eugène, now waked to fury, followed Maxime and the Comtesse. They proceeded as far as the hearth, and there stood face to face again, those three, in the great room. The student was quite aware that he

was causing annoyance to this hateful Maxime; but to annoy the dandy was just what he wished to do, even at the risk of displeasing Madame de Restaud. Suddenly he recollected having seen this young man at Madame de Beauséant's ball, and then as suddenly divined in what relation Maxime stood to Madame de Restaud. With that audacity of youth which begets great blunders and great successes in the social world, he said to himself:

"That man is my rival; I mean to triumph over him."

A foolish boast! For he did not know that the Comte Maxime de Trailles was wont to permit himself to be insulted, then fired first, and killed his man. Eugène was a good enough sportsman, but he had never yet got twenty bull's-eyes out of twenty-two at pistol practice.

The Comte threw himself into an easy-chair by the fire-place, and, seizing the tongs, began to stir the fire with such violence and bad temper that the beautiful face of Anastasie began to fill with trouble. The young woman turned to Eugène, and directed straight at him a look, cold and questioning, which said quite plainly, "Why won't you go away?" Well-bred people know that look and take it as a signal to begin to say their good-byes.

Assuming an agreeable air, Eugène said "Madame, I hastened to call upon you, in order to . . ."

He stopped abruptly. A door opened, and the gentleman who had driven the tilbury entered the room. He had not brought his hat, and he did not salute the Comtesse, and he only glanced indifferently at Eugène—but he shook hands with Maxime, and said, "good-morning!" with

an expression of brotherly goodwill, that took Eugène very much by surprise. Young persons from the provinces do not know how full of amenity is the life of three people—the mated pair and the other man—who understand one another.

"Monsieur de Restaud," said the Comtesse to Eugène, indicating her husband.

Eugène bowed profoundly.

"This," she continued, presenting Eugène to the Comte de Restaud, "is M. de Rastignac. Monsieur is a relation of Madame la Vicomtesse de Beauséant through the Marcillacs, and I had the pleasure of meeting him at the last ball."

Relation of Madame la Vicomtesse de Beauséant through the Marcillacs. The Comtesse pronounced these words very distinctly, with the pride which the lady of the house has in being able to show that she receives none but personages of mark. Their effect was magical. The Comte's cold ceremonial manner vanished as he bowed to the student.

"I am delighted, Monsieur," he said, "to make your acquaintance."

Even the Comte Maxime de Trailles now glanced a little uneasily at Eugène, and allowed his insolent air to disappear. The intervention of a powerful name was like the stroke of a fairy's wand; it opened thirty compartments in the brain of the young Meridional, and gave back to him all the cleverness which he had prepared for this occasion. A sudden light had broken, and he could see clearly in the atmosphere of Parisian high life, where a moment before he had groped in darkness. The Maison Vauquer, Père Goriot—they were far away from his thoughts now.

"I had thought the Marcillacs were extinct," said the Comte de Restaud to Eugène.

"And it is true, sir," he replied. "My grand-uncle, the Chevalier de Rastignac, married the heiress of the Marcillac family. He had for issue only one daughter, who married the Maréchal de Clarimbault, who became the grand-father of Madame de Beauséant on the mother's side. Thus we are the younger branch, a branch all the poorer because my grand-uncle, the Vice-Admiral, lost his all in the service of the King. The Revolutionary Government refused to admit our claims when the affairs of the Compagnie des Indes were liquidated."

"Was not your grand-uncle in command of the *Vengeur* before 1789?"

"Exactly."

"Then he was acquainted with my grand-father, who commanded the *Warwick*."

Maxime looked at Madame de Restaud and shrugged his shoulders, as who should say, "If he is going to tell tales of the sea with this fellow, we are lost." Anastasie understood; and with that admirable gift which women have, she smiled and said:

"Come, Maxime, I want you to do something for me. Gentlemen, we shall leave you to sail the high seas in consort a-board the *Warwick* and the *Vengeur*."

She rose and made a sign to Maxime, expressive of charming naughtiness and mockery, and so they took their way towards the boudoir. But this morganatic couple (to use a nice German phrase for which French has no equivalent) had scarcely reached the door, when the Comte suddenly broke off his conversation with Eugène.

"Anastasie! stay here, dear," he cried with some annoyance. "You know quite well that . ."

"I'm coming," she said. "I'm coming at once. I only wish—to speak to Maxime for a second about an errand I want him to do for me."

She returned promptly. For every woman who is forced to study her husband's character, to the end that she may do what she like with herself in her own time, soon learns how far she can go without imperilling that confidence which is so precious to her—and therefore takes care never to thwart him in the small affairs of life: so the Comtesse had now gathered from her husband's tone that there would be no security for her in the boudoir. She indicated Eugène—for the benefit of Maxime—with a look and a gesture of impatience, whereupon Maxime, speaking in very precise tones, said to the Comte, the Comtesse and the student:

"Come, I see you are busy. I do not wish to be in the way. Good day!" And he withdrew.

"Do stay, Maxime!" cried the Comte.

"Come to dinner," said the Comtesse; and again she left Eugène and the Comte, and followed Maxime into the first salon, where they stayed long enough, as they hoped, for M. de Restaud to get rid of Eugène.

Their laughter, their talk, their intervals of silence, were all marked by Eugène. But the malicious student exerted his wits all the more to interest Monsieur de Restaud. He flattered him, he embarked him on long discussions, in order that he might see the Comtesse again, and find out what were her relations with Père Goriot. This woman, who was evidently enamoured of Maxime, this woman who was her

husband's mistress, and who had a secret connection with the old vermicelli-maker—she seemed to him a mysterious being. He would penetrate the mystery, and hoped thereby to be able to reign with sovereign power over this eminently Parisian dame.

"Anastasie!" the Comte called again.

"Come, my poor Maxime," she said to the young man. "We must resign ourselves. But this evening . . ."

"I hope, Nasie," he whispered in her ear, "that you will *consign* this young fellow, whose eyes, by the way, glowed like coal when your gown came a little open. He will make love to you; will compromise you; and you will force me to kill him."

"Are you mad, Maxime?" she said. "And are not those little student lovers, on the contrary, capital lightning conductors? Just you see; I shall set him and Restaud by the ears."

Maxime laughed aloud and left the room, followed by the Comtesse, who went to the window to see him enter his carriage, shake his whip and make the horse prance. She only came back when the great gate was closed again.

"Just think, my dear," cried the Comte, as she came forward, "the estate of Monsieur's family is not far from Verteuil, on the Charente. His grand-uncle and my grandfather were old acquaintances."

"Delighted to find that we are on familiar ground," said the Comtesse, absently.

"More so than you think," said Eugène in a low voice.

"How do you mean?" she asked quickly.

"Well," replied the student, "a little ago I saw departing from here a gentleman who lives

in the same boarding-house with me, and whose room is next to mine — I mean Père Goriot."

On hearing this nickname of Père, the Comte, who was arranging the fire, threw down the tongs as if they had burned him, and rose to his feet.

"Sir," he cried, "you might have said M. Goriot."

The Comtesse at first paled on seeing her husband's anger; then she flushed, and was visibly embarrassed. Speaking in a voice that she tried to make natural, and with an air of factitious indifference, she said:

"It is impossible to know anybody whom we love more dearly . . ."

She stopped and looked towards her piano as if recollecting some fantasy, and said, "Do you like music, monsieur?"

"Very much," answered Eugène, now flushed and disconcerted, and vaguely feeling that he had made a loutish blunder.

"Do you sing?" she cried; and seating herself at the piano, she ran her fingers over the keys, swiftly traversing the whole compass of the instrument—Rrrrah!

"No, madame."

The Comte de Restaud strode to and fro.

"That is a pity; you leave yourself without a valuable means of success . . . *Ca-a-ro*, *ca-a-a-ro*, *Ca-a-à-a-ro*, *non du-bi-ta-re*," sang the Comtesse.

The name of Père Goriot had touched the whole situation like a magic wand; but this time the effect of the touch was quite the contrary to that produced by the words "relation of Madame de Beauséant." He was like a man who has been permitted as a great favour to view the art-treasures collected in the house of a virtuoso, and who has inadvertently knocked against a cabinet

full of sculptured figures, and so caused three or four badly-fixed heads to fall off. He wished the earth would swallow him. On Madame de Restaud's face there was a cold expressionless look, her eyes were become indifferent, and they avoided those of the unlucky student.

"Madame," he said, "you have things to talk of with M. de Restaud. Pray accept my compliments, and permit me . . ."

"Whenever you care to call," said the Comtesse, hastily, interrupting him by a gesture, "be assured that you will be affording us—to M. de Restaud not less than to myself—a most sincere pleasure."

Eugène bowed deeply to the couple and withdrew, followed by M. de Restaud, who insisted on accompanying him as far as the ante-chamber.

"Every time that gentleman calls again," said the Comte to Maurice, "neither Madame nor I will be at home."

When Eugène stepped outside, he found it was raining.

"Well," he thought, "I have committed a blunder of which I neither know the meaning nor the consequences, and now I am to ruin my hat and coat into the bargain. Verily, I ought to stick in my corner and grind away at law, and have no other ambition than to become a commonplace police magistrate. How can *I* go into the world of fashion when it is impossible to turn yourself about there, unless you have a whole string of cabs at command, and boots always newly varnished, and a whole ship's rigging of indispensable things, chains of gold, fresh white doeskin gloves every morning, that cost six francs, and yellow gloves for every after-

noon. As for that old fool of a Père Goriot—he may hang for me!"

As he stood under the gateway, he was remarked by the driver of a hired carriage, who had evidently come from setting down a bridal party, and who now wished nothing better than to ply a turn or two to his private advantage, before returning to his employer's yard. This man saw that Eugène—with black coat, white waistcoat, yellow gloves, and varnished boots—had no umbrella; and accordingly made a sign to him. Eugène was now under the influence of one of those fits of dull mortification and anger, which will cause a young man to plunge himself deeper and deeper into the abyss into which he has stumbled, as if he hoped to find an exit on the other side. He answered the driver's signal with a nod, and stepped into the coach. Some fragments of orange-blossom and a few bits of wire-ribbon told their tale of a bridal party that had lately passed that way.

"Where to, sir?" asked the driver, who had already taken off his white gloves.

"The deuce!" thought Eugène, "since I've let myself in for something, I may as well make it serve my turn a little—the Hôtel Beauséant!" he called to the man.

"Which one?" asked the driver.

This impressive phrase fairly crushed Eugène. This prospective young man of fashion did not know that there were two Hôtels Beauséant, and did not know how rich he was in relations who thought nothing about him.

"The Vicomte de Beauséant, rue . . ."

"De Grenelle," said the driver, interrupting him, and nodding. "You see, there's also the hôtel of the Comte and of the Marquis de Beau-

séant, in the Rue Saint-Dominique," he added, as he drew up the step.

"I know there is," replied Eugène stiffly. "Everybody is laughing at me to-day, it seems!" he muttered as he threw his hat on the seat opposite. "Here is an escapade that is going to cost me a king's ransom; but at least I shall make my visit to my cousin, as she calls herself, in truly aristocratic style. Père Goriot has already cost me ten francs, the old scoundrel! My word, I shall recount my adventure to Madame de Beauséant, and perhaps it will make her laugh. She will certainly understand the mysterious relationship between that old rat without a tail and this beautiful woman. It will be better worth while to commend myself to my cousin's good-will than to have anything to do with that immoral woman—who seems to me to be an expensive possession. And if the mere mention of the beautiful Vicomtesse's name has such influence, what influence must she not herself command? Let us aim high. He who would fetch away anything out of Heaven must screw his courage to face God's presence!"

These words are the expression in brief of the thousand and one thoughts which swam through his head. The sight of the falling rain gave him an access of calm and confidence. If two of his precious five-franc pieces were about to perish, he told himself they would be well employed in saving his hat, his coat and boots. He had a sort of joy in hearing his coachman cry, "Gate, please!" The hinges creaked heavily as a Swiss in red uniform and gold lace pushed the gate open, and Rastignac looked out with complaisance while his coach passed under the porch, swept round the court, and drew up under the

awning that was stretched above the wide tier of steps leading up to the doorway of the hôtel. The driver, in his blue great-coat bordered with red, descended to let down the step of the carriage, and Eugène came forth. As he did so he heard stifled laughter coming from beneath the peristyle, where three or four lackeys were already making merry over this equipage, expressive of a showy marriage in low life. Just as their laughter came to his ears, his eyes were already making comparisons between this carriage of his and another which stood near by: one of the smartest broughams in Paris, drawn by two spirited horses, that champed their bits and had rosettes at their ears, while by the head of each stood a groom, in powder and cravate, holding tightly to the bridle-reins lest the proud creatures should start away. In the Chausée d'Antin, and the courtyard of Madame de Restaud, it was the smart cabriolet of the man of six-and-twenty: here, in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, the luxurious equipage of a man of premier rank awaited its master's re-appearance. Thirty thousand francs would not have purchased it.

"Who can this be, I wonder?" thought Eugène, beginning to realise, somewhat late, that he would not find many fashionable women in Paris whose attention was not already occupied, and that the conquest of one of these queens cost something more than blood. "The deuce! Meseems my cousin also has her Maxime!"

He mounted the steps, with all the life gone out of his heart. At his approach, the glass door was opened to him, and he found the lackeys as serious as donkeys under the curry-comb. The ball in which he had taken part had been held

in one of the great reception rooms on the ground floor of the Hôtel de Beauséant; and as he had not had time to call upon his cousin in the interval between the invitation and the ball, he had not yet made his way to the private apartments of Madame de Beauséant. He was now about to look for the first time upon that world of marvellous and personal elegance by which the woman of distinction reveals to our eyes the kind of soul that is hers, and what are the interests, the occupations of her life. Well, the study would be the more interesting to him, because Madame de Restaud's salon had furnished him with a standard of comparison. At a quarter-past four, the Vicomtesse was still visible: five minutes later she would not have received her cousin, who knew nothing at all of this, nor of the many peculiarities of etiquette that prevail in Parisian high life. He was conducted up a wide staircase—white ground, red carpet, gilded balustrade, and banks of flowers—and so into the presence of Madame de Beauséant, whose verbal biography formed one of those personal histories which, with ceaseless variations, are passed from ear to ear every night in the salons of Paris. But of this, also, he knew nothing.

For now three years the Vicomtesse had stood in a certain relation to a very celebrated and very rich Portuguese nobleman, the Marquis d'Ajuda-Pinto. It was one of those innocent liaisons which yet are so pleasurable for the persons concerned that they cannot endure the intervention of any third personality in their interviews. Accordingly the Vicomte de Beauséant had himself set the fashion for the public by respecting, whether he liked it or no, this morganatic union of his wife and the Portuguese nobleman. People

who came to see the Vicomtesse during the earlier days of this friendship would always find the Marquis d'Ajuda-Pinto there already. Madame de Beauséant could not quite shut her door against such callers; but she received them so coldly and studied the ceiling so fixedly during their stay, that they soon understood how much she desired their departure. When it became common knowledge in Paris that Madame de Beauséant did not like people who called between the hours of two and four, she was left in complete solitude. And though she would go to the Bouffons or to the Opera with M. de Beauséant and M. d'Ajuda-Pinto, yet M. de Beauséant, like a man who understands life, would always leave his wife and the Portuguese together after he had seen them to their seats.

But now the time had come for M. d'Ajuda to marry, and he was marrying a Mademoiselle de Rochefide. In the whole of fashionable Paris only one person knew nothing about this marriage, and that person was Madame de Beauséant. Some of her friends, indeed, had spoken of it to her, very vaguely; but she had only smiled, believing that they wished to disturb a happiness which they envied her. None the less, the banns were about to be published, and the handsome Portuguese had indeed called in order to announce the project to the Vicomtesse, but he had not yet dared to betray it by a syllable. Why? In truth, to announce such an *ultimatum* to a woman is the hardest thing in the world. There are men who would retain more courage and serenity lying on the ground before an enemy whose sword is pointed at their heart, than in the presence of a woman who will deliver her soul for two unbroken hours ere she passes into

a swoon, and there is nothing for it but smelling salts! At this moment, then, M. d'Ajuda-Pinto was on thorns. He was eager to get away. He told himself that Madame de Beauséant would learn the news without him saying anything. Or he would write it—yes, it would be better so; better to effect by correspondence than by spoken words this assassination of a sentimental attachment.

When, therefore, the valet de chambre announced M. Eugène de Rastignac, he caused the Marquis d'Ajuda-Pinto to thrill with joy. On the other hand, a woman in love, be it known to all men, has far more ingenuity in supplying herself with suspicions and fears of desertion than she has skill in varying the pleasures which her love affords. When she is on the point of being forsaken, she divines the meaning of a single gesture more rapidly than the courser in Virgil scented from afar the atoms which declared the coming of his Mate.* Be sure, then, that Madame

* It is interesting to trace this passage to its sources. Note first the wording in Balzac, ". . . elle devine plus rapidement le sens d'un geste que le coursier de Virgile ne flaire les lointains corpuscules qui lui annoncent l'amour." Turning to the Roman poet, we find (Georgics III., 250-1) these lines :

> " Nonne vides, ut tota tremor pertentet equorum
> Corpora, si tantum notas odor attulit auras ? "

(" Do you not see it in horses?—how the whole frame of one of these grows tense and thrilled if only the breezes bring to him the odour of the mate he knows.") The Latinity is peculiar and Virgilian; but the thing to notice is, that there is no word here of these "corpuscules" which bulk so largely in Balzac's conception of the matter and in the fashioning of his sentence. If we turn, however, to that great mile-stone and monument of scholarship, Heyne's *Virgil*, we find the following note on this passage: "*Si notas odor attulit auras*, exquisitiore dictum quam, *si odor attulus est*, aut, *si auræ odorem attulere*; modo teneas, *odorem* sic esse rem quæ olfactus sensum excitet, emittendo corpuscula quibus auræ ingravescunt." We may gather from this token,

de Beauséant did not fail to detect this thrill, involuntary as it was, and slight, but terrible in its sincerity.

Eugène did not yet know that one ought never to enter the house of anyone in Paris, no matter whom, without having first learned from friends of the family, the husband's history and that of his wife or children, so as to ensure oneself against committing any of these blunders whereof they say in Poland: "Now yoke five oxen to your cart!"—for nothing less than five oxen will pull you out of the quagmire into which you have fallen through not knowing the ground. If we have no special term in France for these conversational misadventures, it must be because they are regarded as impossible among us by reason of the enormous publicity that is given to every scandal here. After having landed himself in a quagmire during his call on Madame de Restaud, who had not even allowed him time to yoke five oxen to his cart, Eugène was alone capable of exemplifying anew his quality as a carter in presenting himself before Madame de Beauséant. As it happened, however, if he had caused dire annoyance to Madame de Restaud and M. de Trailles, he drew M. d'Ajuda out of an embarrassing predicament.

"Good-bye," said the Portuguese, making haste to reach the door as Eugène entered a delightful little salon, decorated in pink and grey,

then, that it was in Heyne's edition that Balzac read Virgil, and that, for all his titanic strength and haste, he was not a cursory or careless reader, but paid diligent attention to the commentary. And surely it is of interest in another way, this ringing together of those two names, so dissimilarly illustrious: Balzac, who worked enormously, but held the faith that "Il faut que l'artiste mène une vie splendide;" and Heyne, who also worked enormously, but did not grudge to be heroically poor.—Tr.

of which the luxury seemed good taste and nothing more.

"But this evening," said Madame de Beauséant, turning her head to glance at the Marquis, "we go to the Bouffons, do we not?"

"I cannot go," he said, touching the door-handle.

Madame de Beauséant arose and called him back to her without taking the least notice of Eugène, who stood dazzled by a richness that seemed marvellous to him. He felt as though the stories of the Arabian Nights had come true; and did not know where to hide himself out of the sight of this Woman—who did not even notice that he was there. The Vicomtesse had raised the first finger of her right hand, and by a pretty gesture indicated to the Marquis where he was to sit in front of her. There was in this gesture such force and imperiousness of passion that the Marquis let go the handle of the door, and went towards her. Eugène looked at him with envy.

"This," he thought, "is the master of the brougham. It seems, then, that you must have prancing horses—and men in livery—and rivers of gold, to get the good-will of any woman in Paris."

The demon of luxury gnawed at his heart, a fever of greed consumed him, his throat was parched with the thirst of gold. He had a hundred and thirty francs a month for his allowance. His father, mother, brothers, sisters, and aunt did not spend two hundred francs a month among them, all told. He was stunned by this rapid comparison between his present condition and the objects he had in view.

"Why is it," said the Vicomtesse, with a smile,

to M. d'Ajuda-Pinto, "that you *cannot come* to the Italiens?"

"Affairs: I dine with the English Ambassador."

"You must throw him over."

When a man starts to deceive, he is forced against his will to heap lie upon lie. So, M. d'Ajuda smiled and said: "You command me to do it?"

"Assuredly."

"I wanted to hear you say that," he replied, bestowing on her a look cleverly enough simulated to have set any other woman's mind at rest. He kissed her hand and withdrew.

Eugène passed his fingers through his hair, and got himself ready to bow to the Vicomtesse, who, he thought, would now notice his presence. But she suddenly sprang forward and ran into the gallery, where she placed herself at a window and watched M. d'Ajuda enter his carriage. She listened intently, and heard the footman repeating the Marquis's order to the driver.

"M. de Rochefide's!"

Those words, and the manner in which M. d'Ajuda threw himself into the carriage—they were thunder-bolt and lightning flash to the woman who heard and saw them. She came back, torn by the most killing apprehensions: it is only in high life that the great catastrophes of emotion are possible. The Vicomtesse went to her bedroom, seated herself at a table, and taking a sheet of dainty note-paper, wrote on it:

"From the moment that you go to dine with the Rochefides, instead of with the English Ambassador, you owe me an explanation, which I now await."

After having mended some of the letters, which her trembling hand had formed badly, she added a "C" as signature—for Claire of Burgundy—and rang the bell.

"Jacques," she said to her valet de chambre, who appeared immediately, "at half-past seven you will go to M. de Rochefide's, and will ask for the Marquis d'Ajuda. If the Marquis is there, you will have this letter taken in to him, and are not to wait for a reply. If he is not there, you will bring the letter back to me."

"Madame la Vicomtesse, there is a visitor in the salon."

"Ah! that is true," she said, opening the door.

Eugène was beginning to feel very ill at ease. At last the Vicomtesse approached, saying to him, in a voice so full of emotion that his heart was touched:

"Pardon me, monsieur; I had to write a note. I am now quite at your service."

She did not know what she said, for while she spoke, she was thinking: "Ah, he is going to marry Mademoiselle de Rochefide. But is he free to do so? To-night, this marriage shall be broken off, or I. . . but there will be nothing of it to-morrow."

"My cousin". . began Eugène.

"Eh?" said the Vicomtesse, giving him a look of haughty disregard, which froze the poor student.

Eugene understood this "Eh?" He had learned a great deal during the last few hours, and his wits were now well awake.

"Madame. . ." he began again, with flushed face.

He stopped, and then went on:

"Forgive me; I have so much need of protec-

tion that the merest scrap of relationship would not be wasted on me."

Madame de Beauséant smiled, albeit sadly. Already she felt presages of the storm of misfortune which was rumbling on the horizon of her life.

"If you knew how my family are placed," he continued, "you would be happy to play the part of one of those beneficent fairies, whose delight it is to remove all difficulties from the paths of their god-children."

"Well, my cousin," she said, smiling, "how can I be of service to you?"

"Ah, how do I know? Already I find that my only fortune in the world consists in my being connected with you by a shadowy bond of relationship. You have thrown my mind into confusion. I have forgotten everything I came to say to you. You are the only woman whom I know in Paris. . . Ah! I remember now—I wished to seek your counsel, to ask you to accept me as a poor child who would fain cling to your skirt for safety, and who would die for you."

"Would you kill a man for me?"

"I would kill two," said Eugène.

"Child that you are! Yes, you are a child," she said, hardly keeping back her tears. "You, at least, would love sincerely."

"Oh!" he exclaimed, and raised his head.

The Vicomtesse's interest in the student was at once heightened by this aspiring answer. The Southern was proceeding by calculation, for the first time in his life. Between the blue boudoir of Madame de Restaud and the pink salon of Madame de Beauséant he had achieved a three years' course of study in that Parisian Law which

is seldom quoted, although it forms a very high branch of social jurisprudence, and, if well understood and well practised, leads to everything in life.

"Ah, I remember now," said Eugène. "I met Madame de Restaud at your ball, and I called upon her this morning.'

"You must have put her out very much, then," said Madame de Beauséant, smiling.

"Yes, indeed; I am very ignorant, and will set all the world against me, unless you give me your help. I am afraid it is very difficult to find in Paris any young woman who is beautiful and rich and fashionable, and who is also sufficiently disengaged to give lessons; and yet I have need of such a one to instruct me in that which you women alone are so well qualified to teach; the ways of Life. Wherever I go, I shall find a M. de Trailles. So I have come to you that you may read the riddle for me, and to ask you to tell me what is the nature of the blunder which I made. I spoke of one Père . . "

"Madame la Duchesse de Langeais," said Jacques, interrupting the student. Eugène betrayed his disappointment and chagrin by a quick gesture.

"If you mean to succeed," said the Vicomtesse, in a low voice, "you must learn, to begin with, not to be so demonstrative."

"Ah, good morning, dear!" she continued, rising and going to meet the Duchesse, whose hand she pressed with the effusive fondness which she might have shown for a sister; to which the Duchesse responded with the prettiest and most endearing graces of look and voice.

"There are two loving friends," thought Rastignac. "So I shall henceforth have two pro-

tectresses. I am sure those two women have their likings in common, and this Duchesse will interest herself in me, for certain."

"To what happy thought do I owe the pleasure of seeing you, my dear Antoinette?" said Madame de Beauséant.

"I saw M. d' Ajuda-Pinto entering the house of M. de Rochefide, so I thought you would be alone."

Madame de Beauséant did not bite her lips, nor did she flush, nor did her look change—rather her brow seemed to clear as the Duchesse pronounced those deadly words.

"If I had known that you were engaged. . ." added the Duchesse, looking towards Eugène.

"This is M. Eugène de Rastignac, one of my cousins," said the Vicomtesse. "Have you any news of General de Montriveau?" she added. "Serizy told me last night that he is never seen now: has he been with you to-day?"

Gossip had it that the Duchesse had been forsaken by M. de Montriveau, with whom she was desperately in love. This remark of the Vicomtesse, therefore, pierced her keenly, and she answered with a flushed face:

"He was at the Elysée yesterday."

"On duty?" said Madame de Beauséant.

"I have no doubt you know, Clara," replied the Duchesse, a river of malignity flowing in her look, "that the banns of M. d'Ajuda-Pinto and Mademoiselle de Rochefide are to be published to-morrow?"

This blow was too violent. The Vicomtesse turned pale, but still answered with a smile:

"One of those rumours with which fools amuse themselves! On what account would M. d'Ajuda carry to the Rochefides one of the most illus-

trious names in Portugal? The nobility of the Rochefides dates from yesterday."

"But they say that Berthe will inherit two hundred thousand livres a year."

"M. d'Ajuda is too rich to be influenced by such considerations."

"But, my dear, Mademoiselle de Rochefide is a charming young girl."

"Ah!"

"At any rate, all the arrangements have been made, and he dines with them to-day. I am surprised to find you so badly posted in what goes on."

"What *was* that blunder that you made, monsieur?" said Madame de Beauséant. "This poor boy has newly plunged into the world and knows nothing, my dear Antoinette, of what we have been talking about. Let us be merciful to him, and finish the subject to-morrow. To-morrow, you see, everything will be quite certain and official, and you will be able to impart your information with perfect security."

The Duchesse turned her head and bestowed upon Eugène one of those looks of contempt which enfold a man from head to foot, flatten him, and leave him in a condition of non-existence.

"Madame, I have, without knowing what I did, plunged a dagger into the heart of Madame de Restaud. Without knowing what I did—therein consists my offence," said the student, whose mother-wit had helped him very well to perceive the biting epigrams that were concealed under the affectionate phraseology of those two ladies. "You continue to see, and perhaps you are afraid of, people who are quite well aware of the hurt they are doing you; but he who hurts you

in ignorance, and knows nothing of the wound that he has inflicted, is looked upon as a fool, a blundering idiot whom nothing will teach, and everybody despises him."

Madame de Beauséant gave the student one of those glances in which a great soul knows how to combine at once gratitude and pride. This recognition came like a balm to soothe the wound which the student's heart had suffered under that contemptuous auctioneer's scrutiny to which the Duchesse had subjected him while she fixed his value.

"Pray consider," continued Eugène, "I had just acquired the goodwill of the Comte de Restaud. For," said he, turning toward the Duchesse, with an air at once humble and malicious, "I must tell you, madame, that I am only but a poor devil of a student, very lonely, very poor. . ."

"You must not tell us that, Monsieur de Rastignac! We women, you know, never desire what nobody else wants to have."

"Bah!" said Eugène; "I am only twenty-two, and I must put up with the disadvantages of my age. Besides, I am now confessing, and one could not kneel down in a confessional more charming—in such a one as this a man falls into the sins for which he seeks absolution in a different confessional."

The Duchesse affected a severe look on hearing this irreligious talk, which she condemned on the score of bad taste. She turned to the Vicomtesse:

"Monsieur has just arrived. . ."

Madame de Beauséant began to laugh freely at her cousin and the Duchesse.

"He has arrived, my dear, in search of an instructress who will teach him good taste."

"Madame la Duchesse," said Eugène, "is it not natural to wish to be initiated into the secret of that which one finds charming?" At the same time he added inwardly—"Bother it! I am certain my style of compliment reminds them of a hairdresser."

"But I understand," said the Duchesse, "that Madame de Restaud is the pupil of M. de Trailles."

"I knew nothing of that, Madame," replied the student; "and therefore I very stupidly threw myself between them. However, I was getting on very well with the husband, and seemed likely to be tolerated by the wife, when I suddenly took it in my head to mention that I was acquainted with a certain man whom I had just noticed issuing from the house by way of the back-stairs, and who had kissed the Comtesse at the end of a passage."

"Who was it?" cried both the ladies.

"An old man who lives at the rate of two louis a month, in the depths of the Faubourg Saint-Marceau, as I do, who am only a poor student. He is a truly lamentable creature, whom everybody makes fun of; and in the boarding-house they call him Père Goriot!"

"But, you foolish boy!" cried the Vicomtesse, "Madame de Restaud is a Mademoiselle Goriot."

"Daughter of a vermicelli-maker," struck in the Duchesse—"a little person who got herself presented on the same day as the daughter of a pastry-cook. Don't you remember it, Clara? The King laughed, and made a joke in Latin—something about flour (*farine*). . . People—what was it, now?—People. . ."

"*Ejusdem Farinæ*," said Eugène.

"That was it," said the Duchesse.

"Ah! then he is her *Father!*" exclaimed the student, with a gesture of dismay.

"Quite so. The good man we speak of had two daughters, of whom he is fond to madness, although the one and the other of them have as good as disowned *him*."

"Did not the second," said the Vicomtesse, looking at Madame de Langeais, "marry a banker with a German name, a Baron de Nucingen? Isn't she called Delphine? Isn't she a blonde, with a side box at the Opera, who comes sometimes to the Bouffons and laughs very loudly, to get herself looked at?"

The Duchesse smiled as she answered:—"My dear, you quite astonish me! Why should you interest yourself so deeply in people like that? Restaud must have been a most amorous idiot indeed, to flour himself all over for the love of Mademoiselle Anastasie. Oh, he will have little luck of his bargain: she is now in the hands of M. de Trailles, who will ruin her."

"And they have disowned their father!" Eugène repeated.

"Well, yes; their father—the father—a father,' replied the Vicomtesse—"a good father, who gave each of them, it is said, five or six hundred thousand francs to secure their happiness by marrying them well, and who only kept eight or ten thousand livres a year for himself, because he thought that his daughters would remain his daughters still, and that he had created for himself two spheres of existence with them, two homes in which he would be adored, and made much of, and smothered in comforts. Within two years, his sons-in-law had banished him from their circle as though he were the poorest beggar man in the land. . ."

Some tears came into the eyes of Eugène, whose nature had been so recently freshened again by contact with the pure and holy affections of family life in his own home: and who was still under the spell of the beautiful ideals of our youth—and who, for the rest, was passing at that moment his first day on the battle-field of Parisian civilisation. Sincere feeling has such a power to convey itself, that those three looked at one another for some time in silence.

"Ah, *mon Dieu*, yes!" said Madame de Langeais. "It seems horrible: and yet we see such things every day. Is there not a reason for it? Tell me, dear, have you ever thought what a son-in-law is? A son-in-law is a man for whom we train up, you or I, a beloved little creature to whom our hearts are fastened by a thousand cords—who for seventeen years is to be the joy of the household, the white soul of the family, as Lamartine would say—and then to become its curse. When this man has taken her away, he will begin by wielding his love like an axe with which to cut out of the heart and living flesh of this angel all the feelings that still bind her to her family. Yesterday, our little girl was everything to us, we were everything to her: to-morrow, she will take part against us. Do we not see this tragedy enacted every day? In one case, the daughter-in-law has nothing but disdain for her husband's father, who has sacrificed everything for his son. In another case, you see the son-in-law turn his wife's mother out of doors. I hear people ask whether there is anything dramatic in the social life of our time. Why, the Drama of the Son-in-law is a frightful reality, to say nothing of our Marriages—which have become very stupid farces indeed. I have quite a clear notion of how

it all came about in the case of the old vermicelli-maker. According to my recollection, this Foriot. . ."

"Goriot, madame."

"Yes, this Moriot was President of his Section during the Revolution. He was in the secret as to the famous scarcity of grain, and laid the foundations of his fortune by selling flour at that period for ten times as much as it cost him. And he was able to get as much of it as he liked: my grandmother's steward sold him corn for immense sums of money. This Noriot shared, of course, with the Committee of Public Safety, which is the way of those people. I remember that the steward told my grandmother she need have no fear about staying where she was, at Grandvilliers, because her corn was a sufficient certificate of civism. Well, this Loriot, who sold corn to the head-hunters of the Revolution, had only one passion: he worshipped his daughters, it was said. He found a perch for the one in the house of Restaud, and grafted the other on the Baron de Nucingen, a rich banker who turned Royalist. You will understand that while the Empire lasted, the two sons-in-law did not find the presence in their circle of this old "Ninety-Three" an impossible incongruity. You could still have that kind of thing in Buonaparte's day. But when the Bourbons were back again, the old man began to be an annoyance to M. de Restaud, and still more so to the banker. The daughters—who perhaps were still fond of their father—tried to manœuvre things between their husbands and their father—tried, as the saying is, 'to keep the goat and not lose the cabbage.' So they received this Toriot when there was nobody else there. Of course, they invented pretexts, suggested

reasons of affection: 'Come to see us to-day, Papa; we shall be quite alone, and that will be much nicer'—and so forth. For my part, my dear, I believe that a heart which loves truly has eyes and an intelligence of its own, and knows everything: so this poor Ninety-Three must have bled inwardly. He saw that his daughters were ashamed of him; that they loved their husbands —to whom *he* was objectionable. So, he must sacrifice himself; and he did sacrifice himself— because he was a father. He decreed his own banishment. When he saw how satisfied his daughters were with the arrangement, he felt that he had done a good turn. In this little crime, the father and the daughters were mutual accomplices, you see. And you will see it wherever you care to look. As for this father, this Doriot, what would he have been in the salon of his daughters but a clot of dry mud on the floor? He would have felt out of place, and he would have grown weary of it all. And what happened in the case of this father with his daughters, may happen to the prettiest woman in the world with the man she loves best. If she tires him of her love, he will go away, he will have recourse to any baseness to effect his escape. The fate of all our devotions is there: our hearts are a treasury—and to pour forth all their contents at once leaves you beggared forever. The love which stands forth into full view and reveals itself utterly, it is like the man without a sou in his pocket; and neither is to be forgiven. This father had given everything. For twenty years he had given the bowels of compassion, the love of his heart. In one day he had given the whole of his fortune. The last drop having been squeezed from the lemon, his daugh-

ters have thrown the poor remainder into the gutter."

"It is an infamous world," said the Vicomtesse, plucking threads from her shawl as she spoke. But she did not lift her head: for she was touched to the quick by the words which Madame de Langeais had aimed at her in telling the story.

"Infamous? No," replied the Duchesse. "It goes its own way, that is all. If I speak of it so candidly, it is only to show that I am not its dupe. I think as you do," she continued, pressing the hand of the Vicomtesse—"the world is a slough; so let us try to keep ourselves on the heights above it."

She rose and kissed the Vicomtesse on the brow, saying:

"You are very beautiful at this moment, dear. I have never seen so pretty a colour in my life!"

And having saluted the student with a slight inclination of the head, she withdrew.

"Père Goriot is sublime!" exclaimed Eugène, remembering how he had seen him kneading the silver dishes in the night-time.

Madame de Beauséant was in deep reverie, and did not hear him. Some moments passed in complete silence, and the poor student, rendered stupid by shame and embarrassment, dared neither to go away, nor to remain, nor to speak a word.

"It is an infamous and wicked world!" said the Vicomtesse at last. "As soon as any unhappiness befalls you, there is always a good friend eager to come and announce it, and to search your heart with a dagger while pretending to talk about the beauty of the handle. Already sarcasms, already jests!. . . Ah, I shall know how to defend myself!"

She raised her head like the great lady that she was, and her eyes flashed proudly.

"Ah!" she said, observing Eugène, "you are here!"

"Still here," he answered, with piteous humility.

"Well, M. de Rastignac, treat this world as it deserves. You wish to succeed—I will aid you! You shall sound women's hearts and find how deep is their corruption, you shall take the height of men's miserable vanity and see how far it reaches. I have read widely in the book of this world; nevertheless, some pages were closed to me. Now, I know all. The more coldly you calculate your aims, the further you will advance. Strike without pity, and you will be feared. Use men and women only as post-horses, to be left to die at the end of each stage; so you will arrive at the goal of your desires. Understand, you will be nothing here unless some woman interests herself in you. She of whom you have need must be young, rich, fashionable. But if you have any true capacity for feeling, hide it as though it were your sole treasure. Once be suspected of a heart, and you are lost—from being the executioner you will become the victim. Should you ever love, guard well your secret: never reveal it until you are thrice-assured that you know well to whom you are opening your heart! And to safeguard in advance the love which does not yet exist, learn betimes to distrust this whole world of Parisian life. Listen, Miguel. . ." (the wrong name came to her lips so naturally that she did not notice her blunder.) "There is a sight more horrible still than that of the father cast off by his daughters, who wish him dead. It is the rivalry of those two sisters with one another. Restaud has good birth; therefore his wife has

been taken up, has been presented: but her sister, her rich sister, the beautiful Madame Delphine de Nucingen, the wife of a great capitalist, is dying of chagrin. She is a hundred leagues away from her sister, and jealousy consumes her because of it. Her sister is no longer her sister—they disown one another, those two women, as they have both disowned their father. Well, then, Madame de Nucingen would lap all the mud there is between the Rue Saint-Lazare and the Rue de Grenelle, to gain entry to my salon. She thought de Marsay would be able to bring her there, and she made herself the slave of de Marsay; she makes de Marsay's life a weariness. De Marsay cares very little about her. If you present her to me, you will be her Benjamin, she will adore you. After that, love her if you can; if not, make use of her. I shall see her once or twice, on the set evenings when there is a crush of company here; but I shall never receive her in the mornings. I will bow to her outside, that will be sufficient. You have closed the door of the Comtesse against yourself by mentioning the name of Père Goriot. Yes, my dear, you will call twenty times on Madame de Restaud, and twenty times she will not be at home. You have been "consigned." Well, let Père Goriot procure you access to Madame Delphine de Nucingen. The beautiful Madame de Nucingen will be an ensign, an oriflamme in your keeping, on the battlefield that awaits you. Be but the man whom *she* distinguishes, and all the women will go mad for you. Her rivals, her friends, her best friends even, they will all want to take you from her. There are women whose way it is to love the man already chosen by another, just as there are women of the middle class who think, poor things,

that if they steal the fashion of our hats they may acquire our manners. You will have conquests, successes. In Paris, success is everything; it is the key to Power. If the women find that you have wit and talent, the men will take their word for it, unless you undeceive them yourself. Every ambition will then be possible for you, for you will have the entrée everywhere. Then you will see what the world is, a gathering of dupes and rogues. Be you neither of the one party nor of the other. I give you my name as an Ariadne's clew to take with you into the labyrinth. Do not compromise it," she said, curving her neck, and regarding the student with the glance of a queen —"return it to me unsullied. And now, go; leave me: for we have also our battles to fight, we women."

"If you have need of a man of good will to go and fire a mine.". . said Eugène, interrupting her.

"What then?" she asked.

He tapped his chest, smiled in answer to his cousin's smile, and withdrew.

It was five o'clock, and Eugène was hungry, so that he began to fear lest he should be late for dinner. This fear made him feel all the more how delightful it was to be whirled rapidly through the streets of Paris. Travelling thus without volition, he was entirely at the mercy of the thoughts that crowded and assailed him. When a young man of that age feels the touch of contempt upon him, he loses his head, becomes wild with rage. He shakes his fist at Society, and in the same thought he vows to be avenged and secretly doubts whether he is one who can achieve anything. At this moment Rastignac

was overwhelmed by the words: "*You have closed the Comtesse's door against you.*"

"I shall go!" he exclaimed; "and if Madame de Beauséant is right—if I am *consigned*. . I shall. . . Madame de Restaud shall meet me in every salon she enters! I shall learn to fence; I shall practise with the pistol; and I shall kill her Maxime for her!"

"And the money!" cried a voice within him—"where will you get that?"

At once there shone before his eyes all the display of richness that he had seen in the house of the Comtesse de Restaud. That was the kind of splendour beloved of a Mademoiselle Goriot: the heavy gildings, the precious objects ostentatiously displayed, the unintelligent luxuriousness of the parvenu, the extravagance of the kept woman. The fascinating vision was suddenly blotted out by the quiet grandeur of the Hôtel de Beauséant. His imagination moved now in the upper air of Parisian society, and a thousand evil thoughts came into his heart. His intelligence was enlarged, his conscience widened. He saw the world as it is: that the rich were exempt from law and morality, and that fortune, success, was the *ultima ratio mundi*.

"Vautrin is right—success is virtue!" he said to himself.

On arriving at the Rue Neuve-Saint-Geneviève he ran quickly up to his own room and brought down ten francs for the driver. He then entered the hideous dining-room, where he beheld the eighteen boarders, ranged round the table like so many cattle at their stalls, all in the act of nourishing their bodies. The sight of those poor wretches and the whole aspect of this room filled

him with a kind of loathing. The transition was so abrupt, the contrast so tremendous, that in the recoil from it his ambitions shot up beyond all bounds. On the one side, a picture of the most refined social life in its freshest and most charming forms, young animated faces, set in the marvels of luxury and art for a framework—dear heads impassioned, full of poetry: on the other, a sinister spectacle in a setting of clay, and faces from which the passions of life had obliterated all feeling, leaving only the ropes and pulleys of an inhuman mechanism. He recalled now what Madame de Beauséant had said of life in the moment of her own anger and forsakenness, and what she had offered, in bitter caprice, to do for his advancement. And now the poverty around him was a commentary on the truth of her teaching, the value of her help. Rastignac resolved to open two trenches, to work along two parallel paths to fortune: to put his trust in Science and Love, to be a learned Doctor in the schools, a man of note in the world of fashion. In truth he was still very young!—or he would have known that these two lines are asymptotes, which may converge, but never meet.

"You are very dull to-day, Monsieur le Marquis," said Vautrin, giving him one of those looks with which this man seemed to pluck out the most hidden mysteries of another heart.

"I am not disposed to endure pleasantries from people who call me 'Monsieur le Marquis,'" said Eugène. "To be a real Marquis in this world, it is needful to have a hundred thousand livres a year; and if one lives in the Maison Vauquer, one is not exactly Fortune's Favourite."

Vautrin regarded him with an expression at once paternal and contemptuous. "The cub!"

it seemed to say—'I could make just one mouthful of him!" Then he answered:

"You are in a bad humour! Perhaps you have not fared happily in your visit to the beautiful Comtesse de Restaud?"

"She has closed her door against me for having told her that her father dined at our table," exclaimed Rastignac.

All the boarders stared at one another. Père Goriot looked down; and immediately afterwards turned his head aside to wipe his eyes.

"You have sent some snuff into my eyes," he said to the man beside him.

"Whoever annoys Père Goriot in future, attacks me," said Eugène, looking straight at the old man's neighbour. "He is worth more than the whole lot of you. I am not speaking of the ladies," he added, turning towards Mademoiselle de Taillefer.

This speech marked a dramatic crisis in the boarding-house, and Eugène delivered it with an air that held them silent. Vautrin alone answered him, mockingly:

"If you take Père Goriot under your charge, and constitute yourself his responsible manager, you will want to know something of swordsmanship and pistol-shooting."

"I shall know something," said Eugène.

"Do you begin the campaign to-day, then?"

"Perhaps," said Rastignac; "but I owe nobody an account of my actions, so long as I do not trouble to find out what other people do in the night-time."

Vautrin looked askance at Rastignac.

"My good boy, if one doesn't wish to be fooled by the marionettes, one must get right inside the show, and not be content with stolen peeps

through a hole in the curtain. Enough said!" he added, seeing that Eugène was about to reply hotly. "We shall have a little talk by ourselves whenever you like."

During the remainder of that meal, gloom and constraint prevailed everywhere. Père Goriot was absorbed in his own thoughts, sorrowing for what he had heard the student say about the Comtesse. He did not perceive that the attitude of his fellow-boarders towards him was changed, or that his defence had been taken up by a young man who had it in his power to close the lips of his persecutors.

"So M. Goriot," said Madame Vauquer, in a low voice, "is the father of a Comtesse, just as he sits there?"

"And of a Baronne," answered Eugène.

"He had to be that, or nothing," said Bianchon to Eugène. "I have examined his head, and he has only one bump, the bump of Paternity. He is a sort of *Eternal Father*."

Eugène's mind was too deeply occupied for him to laugh at Bianchon's pleasantry. He wished to turn Madame de Beauséant's instruction to account, and he was now asking himself how and where he was to supply himself with money for the enterprise. His heart became heavy with care as he seemed to behold the great savannahs of the world unrolling and stretching away beneath his eyes: so empty for him, and yet so full! The dinner had ended, and one by one the boarders had left him alone.

"Then you saw my daughter?" said Goriot, speaking in tones full of emotion.

Awaked from his reverie by the old man's voice, Eugène took his hand, and looked at him with a sort of tenderness of regard:

"You are a good and noble man," he said. "We shall have a talk about your daughters later on."

He got up without waiting for Goriot's reply, and went to his room, where he wrote this letter to his mother:

My Dear Mother,—Your son is going to ask you if you will nourish him at your breast again! I am in a position to make my fortune almost immediately; but I have need of twelve hundred francs, and must get them at any cost. Say nothing of this to my father, for he would perhaps oppose your sending me the money—and if I do not have it I shall be the victim of a despair which may drive me to blow my brains out. I shall explain my objects as soon as I see you, for I should have to write volumes if I tried to make you understand at once the situation in which I find myself. I have not gambled, dear mother, and I am in nobody's debt; only, if you really desire to preserve still the life which you gave me, you must send me the sum I mention. Briefly, I go to see the Vicomtesse de Beauséant, who is going to help in my advancement. I must mix with Society, and I have not a sou to buy clean gloves with. I would willingly live on bread alone and drink nothing but water—I would fast altogether, if need be—but only I can *not* do without the tools with which they dig the vineyards of *this* country. It is with me a question of making my way in life now, or remaining forever in the mire. I know all the hopes that you rest on me, and I wish to realise them quickly. My dear mother, sell some of your old jewels; I shall provide you with new ones very soon. I know the state of our affairs at home too well not to prize

dearly the sacrifices you make for me, and you must believe that I would not ask you to do this for a little cause. If I did, I should be a monster. In what I now beg of you, you must hear only the voice of a crying necessity. The whole of our future depends on the arrival of this support, with which I shall be able to take the field—for this life in Paris is a continual battle. If you cannot make up the whole amount, and there is no other way for it but to sell my aunt's lace, tell her that I shall send her some lace more beautiful than her own. . ." and so forth.

He wrote to each of his sisters, asking for their savings. He knew that they would themselves have no feelings but of pleasure in making this sacrifice for him—and therefore his only way of ensuring that they should not talk of the transaction to the other members of the family lay in an appeal to their delicacy, and a touch upon those chords of honour which are drawn so tense and sound so clearly in the hearts of the young. When the letters were written, he could not repress some involuntary agitations: he trembled, his heart beat wildly. He, with all his ambitions, knew well the noble purity of those kind ones buried away down there in the lonely manor-house, he knew the trouble to which his sisters would be put, and the joy they would extract from it, what pleasures would be theirs in stealing away to the foot of the orchard, there to entertain each other with talk of this brother, whom they loved so much! The spaces of his mind seemed suddenly lighted up, and in the midst he saw those sisters, counting over their little store in secret: he saw them exercising their whole little resource of girlish deception in order to get

this money transmitted to him unbeknown, making their first essay in falsehood in their eagerness to be unselfishly sublime.

"The heart of a sister is a diamond of purity, a deep sea of tenderness," he told himself.

He was ashamed of having written to them. How passionate would be their prayers for him —how swiftly would their pure souls go forth in intercession to Heaven for his sake. Yes, and they would make this sacrifice for him, with what delight! How his mother would grieve should she be unable to send the whole amount that he had asked! And those beautiful affections, those terrible sacrifices, were to be used as ladders to bring him into the presence of Delphine de Nucingen. Some tears came into his eyes, the last grains of incense thrown on the sacred altar of Home Love. He walked up and down, in an agitation that was almost a despair. Thus he was seen by Père Goriot, whose door stood half open. The old man came forward and said:

"What is the matter, sir?"

"Ah, good neighbour! I am, you see, a son and a brother, even as you are a father. You have cause to tremble for the Comtesse Anastasie: she is in the power of M. Maxime de Trailles, and he will ruin her."

Père Goriot withdrew, muttering some words, of which Eugène did not catch the meaning. On the following day, Rastignac took the letters to the post. He hesitated to let them go till the last moment, but finally he threw them into the box, exclaiming, "I shall succeed!" It is the cry of the gambler, of the great captain, an invocation of Destiny—but it has ruined more men than it has ever saved.

A few days later he presented himself at

Madame de Restaud's, and was not received. Thrice he returned, and thrice he found the door closed, although he went at periods of the day when he knew that M. de Trailles was not there. The Vicomtesse, then, was right.

The student now studied no more. He went to lectures, to answer the roll-call; but having thus attested his presence, he slipped away. He had gone through a course of argument with himself which nearly all students have had some practice in. He would reserve his studies till the time when they would be needed for passing his examinations. He would cram all the work of the second and third years into the last of these terms, and then would take up the subject of Law thoroughly, and acquire proficiency in it by one magnificent effort at the last moment. There were thus fifteen months during which he was free to navigate at will the great ocean of Parisian life, to ply his traffic of good grace among the women of those waters, and somewhere, with their aid, to draw a fortune from the depths.

He saw Madame de Beauséant twice during the week, but was careful not to present himself until he observed the Marquis d'Ajuda's carriage drive away. For a few days longer, victory remained with this illustrious woman, the most poetic figure of the Faubourg Saint-Germain; the marriage between Mademoiselle de Rochefide and the Marquis d'Ajuda-Pinto was deferred. Yet these last days, which the fear of losing her happiness rendered the most passionate of her life, could only bring the catastrophe more near. The Marquis d'Ajuda and the Rochefides were equally disposed to regard this quarrel and this reconciliation as a circumstance of good omen. They were in hopes that Madame de Beauséant

would grow accustomed to the thought of this marriage, and would end by sacrificing her mornings with her lover to a future foreseen in the lives of men.

In spite of the most solemn assurances daily renewed, M. d'Ajuda was thus playing a part; and the Vicomtesse was glad to be deceived. "Instead of leaping heroically from the window, she is letting herself fall down the staircase:" so said the Duchesse de Langeais, her best friend. Nevertheless, those last gleams of happiness continued long enough for the Vicomtesse to remain some time in Paris, and there to make herself of service to her young relation, for whom she had conceived a kind of superstitious affection. Eugène had given proofs of his devotion and his sympathy at a time when women are not wont to see real pity or real comfort in any eyes. If a man speaks kindly at such a crisis, he does it with an object in view.

Desiring to have a thorough knowledge of the condition of affairs before he should attempt to enter the house of de Nucingen, Rastignac took steps to make himself acquainted with the early life of Père Goriot. He gathered information from various quarters, which may be briefly run together as follows:—

Before the Revolution, Jean-Joachim Goriot was an ordinary workman in the employment of a vermicelli-maker. He was skilful and thrifty, and sufficiently enterprising to buy his master's business, when the latter had the bad luck to fall a victim in the early troubles of 1789. He established his business in Rue de la Jussienne, hard by the Corn-Exchange. He had also the great good sense to accept the position of President of his Section, so as to secure for

his business the goodwill and protection of the personages who had the greatest influence in those dangerous times. This wise step had laid the foundation of his fortune, which took form in the year of that great Dearth, real or pretended, which sent up the price of grain of all kinds to an enormous figure in Paris. The common people were crushing themselves to death at the bakers' shop-doors, while, at the same time, certain other persons went to the confectioners' and bought Italian paste-foods without making any disturbance whatever. It was during this year that Citizen Goriot amassed the capital which enabled him at a later time to carry on his business with all the advantages which go with the possession of large sums of ready money; and it was with him as with many another man of merely average abilities—his mediocrity kept him right, so he never ruined himself. And as the extent of his fortune was unknown until the time had passed when there was a danger in being rich, he escaped the shafts of envy also.

The interests of a corn-dealer seemed to have absorbed the whole range of his intelligence, and it is true that in knowledge and grasp of these things he had no equal and no second. There was no such authority on any question regarding wheats, and flours, and middlings—the variations in their quality, the best methods for their production, their storage; none so certainly as he could anticipate the movements of the market, or tell whether the year's harvest was going to be meagre or abundant, or had such a gift for buying in a cheap home market, or had such enterprise in arranging for future consignments from Sicily or the Ukraine. To see him in the

management of his affairs, to hear him expound the laws regulating the exportation or the importation of grain—study their spirit and intention—put his finger on their defects—one would have said that this man should have been a Minister of State. Patient, active, energetic, persevering, and rapid in action, he surveyed his chosen domain with the eye of an eagle. He was beforehand with every event by the time it had arrived; for he foresaw everything, knew everything, and revealed nothing. He was, in fine, a diplomatist to conceive, a good soldier to march. Yet, when he stepped outside of his specialty—as he might step outside his little dark shop, on the door-step of which he was wont to stand idly during his unoccupied moments, with his shoulder propped against the door-post—then he became once more the mere workman, uncultivated, stupid, a man incapable of following an argument, sensitive to none of the pleasures of the mind, a man who would fall asleep in a playhouse: in fine, one of those Dolibans of Paris, with no attribute or portion, save the strength of stupidity. These natures are nearly all alike, and in nearly every one of them you will find some exalted single affection that is the life of his heart. Two such affections had in turn filled the heart of the vermicelli-maker to the exclusion of all else; had absorbed his whole capacity for feeling, even as the corn-trade had employed his whole power of thought.

His wife, who was the only daughter of a rich farmer of La Brie, was to him the object of an almost religious reverence, a love that knew no limits. Her nature, at once fragile and buoyant, sensitive and sweet, was in marked contrast with his own, and he loved her the more for that

unlikeness. If there is any sentiment in man's heart that is primordial and ineradicable, is it not the pride of protecting and safeguarding at all times a being more defenceless than oneself? To this pride, add love, that eager impulse of gratitude felt by all generous natures towards the source of their joys, and you will have the key to a whole crowd of enigmas in the passions and behaviour of mankind. But after seven years of unclouded happiness, Goriot lost his wife, just when her influence over him was beginning to have effect outside the sphere of their affection for each other. Perhaps she might yet have drawn from this sluggish and unworked nature, the fruits of a fuller culture; perhaps she might have quickened his mind to a knowledge, an appreciation, of the things of life, the varieties of social existence. But she died; and then the sentiment of paternity sprang up and grew in the heart of Goriot till it became a madness. All the wealth of love that had been cheated of its mark by his wife's death, he now poured out on his daughters, who gave him at that time all the affection that he asked. Despite the attractive propositions offered him by business men and farmers who were all emulous of having him married to a daughter of theirs, he persisted in remaining a widower. His father-in-law, the only man for whom Goriot had a personal regard, gave it out that he knew as a fact that Goriot had sworn that he would never be unfaithful to his wife, even in her death. The frequenters of the Corn-Exchange were unable to understand such an exaltation of folly as this, and consequently made little jokes about it, and ended in fixing upon him a grotesque nickname. The first of them who ventured to mention it in his presence

—while the two drank a glass of wine at the close of a bargain—received a blow on the shoulder from Goriot's fist, which sent him reeling into the roadway of the Rue Oblin. Goriot's blind and helpless devotion to his daughters—his love for them, so full of fears, and so precise and insistent on every little thing that concerned their well-being—this was so well known on the Corn-Exchange, that on one occasion an attempt was made to turn it to account. A competitor, who knew that if Goriot left the building for a time he himself would be able to command the market, announced to him that Delphine had just been knocked down by a cab. The vermicelli-maker turned deadly pale, and left the Exchange at once. He was ill for several days in consequence of the first shock of this news, and the tremendous reaction which followed when its falsity was made sure. He gave this man no murderous tap on the shoulder; but he used a critical moment in his affairs to force him into bankruptcy, and so drove him from the Corn-Exchange forever.

As was to be expected, the girls were brought up in the most foolish way. With an income of more than sixty thousand francs a year, and spending less than twelve hundred francs upon himself, Goriot found all his enjoyment in gratifying the caprices of his daughters. The very best masters were engaged to impart to them the accomplishments which are the hall-mark of a good education. They had a lady-companion; and, fortunately for them, she was a woman of intelligence and taste. They rode on horseback; they drove in a carriage; they lived as the mistresses of some rich old lord might have lived. If they had a desire, they had only to express it,

and forthwith their father hastened to please them at whatever cost. And with all his givings, he made no demands upon them, save sometimes for a kiss. In a word, the poor fellow had planted his daughters, like angels, on the heights above him—what was *he?*—and he even loved the pain they caused him. So, when the girls were of an age to marry, each must marry only the man of her own choice; and each should have a half of her father's fortune. Anastasie had aristocratic leanings, and, therefore, when her beauty brought the Comte de Restaud to woo, she gladly quitted the paternal nest to fly away into the higher circles of social life. Delphine liked money, and married Nucingen, a banker of German extraction, who became a Baron of the Holy Roman Empire. Goriot remained a vermicelli-maker. Before long, however, his daughters and his sons-in-law began to object to his continuing in this business of buying and selling, though his whole mind lived in it. For five years he stood out against their insistencies and arguments, but at last consented to retire. The capital with which he retired consisted only of his profits made during the last few years, and the sum realised by the sale of his business. This was the capital which Madame Vauquer, when he first came to live in her house, had reckoned up as yielding eight or ten thousand livres a-year. He had been driven to bury himself in this boarding-house in the agony of his hopeless grief, on finding that his daughters had been forbidden by their husbands to have him living with them, or even to receive him when he called, except in secrecy.

This was all the information concerning Père Goriot that could be gathered from a certain

M. Muret, who had bought the vermicelli business. It confirmed, so far, the Duchesse de Langeais' ideas in regard to the case, as Rastignac had heard her unfold them. Here, then, ends the explanatory introduction to this obscure but terrible tragedy of Parisian life.

Towards the end of the first week in December, Rastignac received two letters, one from his mother, and one from his elder sister. The sight of the familiar handwriting affected him strangely, for his heart beat with joy, and yet he trembled with fear. Those two frail pieces of paper contained what was the life or death sentence of his hopes. If his recollection of the scarcity at home had caused him at first to fear a refusal, yet he knew their love too well not to be afraid, rather, that he had simply drained them of their last drop of blood. His mother's letter was in this manner:

My dear Child: I am sending what you asked. Make a good use of this money. If it were to save your life, I could not find so large a sum a second time without letting your Father know of it; and that would not make for happiness at home. To get it, we should have to mortgage the land. It is impossible for me to judge the merits of schemes of which I know nothing; but of what kind can those schemes be to make you fear to confide them to your mother? The explanation would not have required volumes. We mothers, we know how to understand at a word; and this would have spared me much sorrow and uncertainty. I cannot conceal it from you, that your letter has impressed me very sadly. What then, my dear son, is the state of mind that has urged you to flood my

heart with these fears? It must indeed have pained you to write that letter, for it pained me to read it. What is this career, then, on which you have entered? Is your life, your happiness, to depend on your being able to appear what you are not—on your being able to mix in a kind of society which you cannot mix in without incurring expenses which you cannot afford, and without losing precious time that is indispensable for your studies? My dear Eugène, trust the heart of your mother, and believe that crooked ways can never lead to anything great. To be patient and to endure—these should be the virtues aimed at by young folk in your position. I am not scolding you, and I do not wish to mix any bitterness with our offering. My words are only the words of a mother, who trusts you, but also looks ahead for your sake. If on your side you know what you must do, what your present obligations are, I, on my side, know how pure is your heart, how good are your intentions. Therefore, I can say without fear—"Go forward, my dear son, go!" I tremble, because I am a mother; but every step you take will be accompanied by our love and our blessing and our prayers. Be careful, dear child; you have need to have the wisdom of a man, for upon how you acquit yourself depends the whole destiny of five persons who are dear to you. Yes, all our fortunes depend upon you, as all your success is ours. We all pray to God to aid you in your enterprises. Your Aunt Marcillac has shown in this matter a kindness of heart that cannot be described. She understood everything, even down to what you said about your gloves. But then, she says jokingly, she has a weakness for the son and heir. My dear Eugène, love well

this aunt of yours; what she has done for you, I shall not tell you until you have succeeded. If I did, her money would burn your fingers. You do not know, you children, what it is to sacrifice things that speak to you of your past! but what would one not sacrifice for you? She charges me to tell you that she kisses you on the brow, and means that this kiss shall impart to you the gift of finding happiness many many times. This kind and noble woman would have written to you herself, but for the gout in her fingers. Your father is well. The vintage of 1819 has been better than we hoped for. Good-bye, dear child. I shall say nothing of your sisters, for Laure is writing to you. I leave to her the pleasure of gossiping about all the little family happenings. Heaven send that you succeed! Ah! yes, you must succeed, my Eugène! for you have made me feel so sharp a pang, that I could not bear to suffer such a one a second time. I have known what it is to be poor while longing for riches that I might give them to my child. There, good-bye! Do not let us be without news of you, and take now the kiss which your mother sends you."

When Eugène had finished this letter, he was in tears. He thought of Père Goriot crushing his silver plate and selling it in order to redeem his daughter's bill of exchange.

"Your mother has crushed her jewels!" he said to himself. "No doubt your aunt also wept when she sold some of her relics. What right have you to execrate Anastasie? You have just done out of selfish regard for your own future what she did for the benefit of her lover! Of you and her, which is the baser one?

A terrible inward heat smote the student, and seemed to burn like a fire within him. He wished now to renounce the world. He was eager to send back the money. He was swept by a strong current of remorse—that noble and beautiful secret remorse for which little credit is wont to be allowed when men sit in judgment on one another—and yet for the sake of this, it may be, the angels in heaven have already absolved the criminal whom the jurists of the earth condemn to punishment. Rastignac opened the letter from his sister, and his heart was quickly refreshed by the innocence and kindness of the young girl's words:

"Your letter came at a very good time for us, dear brother, for you must know that we have been wanting—Agathe and I have been wanting—to employ our money in so many different ways that we could not make up our minds what it was we really should buy. Now you have done like the servant of the King of Spain, when he upset all his master's watches; you have made us of one mind. Quite truly, we have been continually quarrelling as to *which* desire we should give the preference to, and never thought, my dear Eugène, of the *one* use for this money by which *all* our desires would be fulfilled! Agathe jumped for joy; indeed we have been like two mad things all day—'so extremely so,' as Aunt would say, that Mother remarked to us, in her most severe manner, 'Pray, what is the matter with you, Mesdemoiselles?' If we had been scolded a little, I really think we should have been happier still. A woman must have great delight in suffering things for the man whom she loves! Only, for my part, I was thoughtful and

vexed, for all my joy. I shall make a bad wife, I know; I am so spendthrift. I had bought two sashes, and a pretty stiletto with which to make eyelet-holes in my corset—such silly things to buy!—so that I have not so much money as that great Agathe, who is so frugal and hoards away her money like a magpie. She had two hundred francs! As for me, my poor boy, I have only fifty crowns. That is my punishment, and now I should like to throw my sash into the well, for I shall never care to wear it after this. I have stolen from you. Agathe behaved so nicely; she said to me, 'Let us send the three hundred and fifty francs, both together!' But I cannot keep from telling you just how everything happened. Do you know how we did, in order to obey your commands? We took our glorious heap of money and went out for a walk together. Then when we had gone quietly so far that we had reached the high road, we started to run all the way back to Ruffec, and there we kindly gave the whole amount to M. Grimbert, who has the office for the Messageries Royales. And then we flew back, as light as swallows. 'Is it happiness that makes us so light-footed, I wonder?' said Agathe. But we said a thousand things, which I shall not tell you, Monsieur le Parisien, because they were all about you. O, dear brother, we love you so much—that is all of it in a word. As to keeping the secret, such masking minxes as we, according to my Aunt, are capable of everything, even of holding their peace. Mother has made a mysterious journey to Angoulême, and Aunt went with her, but both the one and the other has kept a profound silence regarding the matters of high state that sent them on that mission. I can tell you, the journey was

not made until several very long conferences had been held—from which we were excluded, also M. le Baron. The public mind is much occupied with these strange occurrences, and many conjectures are rife in the State of Rastignac. The grand muslin robe, embroidered with open-work flowers, which the Royal Princesses are preparing for Her Majesty the Queen, is advancing to completion in profound secrecy. There are only two more widths to do. It has been decreed that the wall on the boundary of our Realm towards Verteuil shall be removed, and that in lieu thereof there shall be a hedge. By reason of this our faithful lieges may lose somewhat in the matter of fruits and espaliers; but the inhabitants of foreign countries will henceforth enjoy a clear prospect of our domains. Should haply the heir apparent be in any need of pocket handkerchiefs, it is herewith made known that the Dowager Lady of Marcillac, whilst searching her treasuries and strong-chests—commonly known under the names of Pompeii and Herculaneum—has discovered there a piece of beautiful Holland cloth, whereof she had no knowledge heretofore. The Princesses Agathe and Laure herewith place at his disposal their thread, their needle, and their hands, albeit these are always a little too red. The two young Princes, Don Henri and Don Gabriel, continue their fatal habit of gorging themselves with grape-jelly, of exasperating their sisters, of rejecting instruction, of robbing birds' nests for a pastime, of kicking up a racket, and of cutting osiers wherewith to make themselves switches, in contravention of the laws of this State. The Papal Nuncio (called, in the vulgar tongue, Monsieur le Curé) has threatened them with excommunication in case they persist

in forsaking the sacred canons of grammar for the cannons of the bellicose elder-tree. Good-bye, dear brother; never has a letter carried so many prayers for your success, nor such a lot of love made happy. Ah, you will have so many things to tell us of when you come home again! You will tell *me* everything—me, because I am the oldest. From something that Aunt said, we almost think that you have had some success in the world. '*They spoke of a lady—then said no more . . .*'—to us, that is! And by the way, Eugène, if you would prefer it, we could let be the handkerchiefs, and make you some shirts instead. Let me have your answer to this at once. If you really have need of some nice new shirts at once, well-made and carefully stitched, we shall need to set about the business without delay. Should it happen that there are any fashions in Paris unknown to us, you will send us a pattern, especially for our guidance in regard to the cuffs. Good-bye! Goodbye! I kiss you on the brow, the left side, at the temple, which belongs to me and nobody else . . . . I leave the other sheet for Agathe, who has promised not to read a word of what I have written. But to make sure, I shall stay beside her while she writes to you. Your sister who loves you.

"Laure de Rastignac."

"Ah, yes, yes!" muttered Eugène—"I must succeed at all costs now! No mere riches can repay this devotion—would that I could send them every happiness in life! Fifteen hundred and fifty francs!" he said, after a pause—"not one of them must miss its mark. Laure is right—those women!—and it is true I've nothing

better than calico shirts. When somebody else's advantage is to be sought, a young girl becomes as full of dodges as a thief. Guileless for herself, and calculating for me, she is like a heavenly angel who pardons the sins of the earth without knowing what they are."

The world was before him! Already his tailor had been summoned, sounded, conquered. His one meeting with M. de Trailles had opened Rastignac's eyes to the influence of the tailor on the lives of the young men. Alas, there is no middle term for the character of that influence! A tailor is either a mortal enemy, or he is a true friend, bound fast to you by your unpaid bill. In his own tailor, Rastignac found a man who had acquired a great conception of the paternal character of his occupation in life, and who regarded himself as a connecting link between the present and the future of young men. And it was in recognition of these merits, and to reward them, that Rastignac made this man's fortune by one of these epigrams in which he excelled at a later time:

"I know of two pairs of trousers from his hands which have made marriages, each of them, of twenty thousand livres a year."

Fifteen hundred francs, and as many suits of clothes as he cared to call for! At this moment the poor Southern had no more doubts of anything, but came down to breakfast with that indefinable air, that something added to his presence, which distinguishes the young man who is in possession of a sum of money, much or little. No sooner has the good money slipped into the student's pocket than there rears itself within his consciousness a grand fantastic column for him to lean against. He walks more erectly

than he did heretofore; he feels that he has a fulcrum for any lever he may wish to work with; he looks straight at you with untroubled eyes. Last night, humble and timid—you might have struck him; to-morrow, he will measure himself against a Prime Minister. Miraculous powers are at work in him. His ambition stops short of nothing, and nothing is too hard for him to achieve; his desires range freely across the breadth of life. He is light-hearted, generous, expansive. In a word, the wingless fledgling of yesterday has now found the full sweep of his pinions. The student without money snatches a scrap of pleasure as a dog may shoot a thousand perils to steal a bone, and then goes off cracking it and sucking the marrow, but fleeing all the time; whereas the young man who feels the rattle of nimble coin in his pocket ponders the flavour of his enjoyments like a connoisseur, takes them leisurely one by one, and makes himself at ease in his happiness. He poises himself in the heights of heaven, and knows nothing more of the poverty of earth. All Paris is his. Ah, the age when all life gleams, and sparkles, and flames! The age of joyful strength, which no one turns to full account, neither man nor woman! The age of debts and of those lively fears which multiply tenfold the stolen pleasure! He who has not been a dweller on the left bank of the Seine, 'twixt the Rue Saint-Jacques and the Rue des Saints-Pères, knows nothing at all about human life!

"Ah! if the women of Paris only *knew*," thought Eugène, as he ate Madame Vauquer's stewed pears at a farthing a piece, "it's here that they would come to find a lover!"

At this moment the wicket bell rang, and im-

mediately afterwards appeared in the dining-room a commissionaire from the Messageries Royales. He asked for M. Eugène de Rastignac, and handed to him two bags and a receipt form for him to sign. Vautrin threw at Eugène a swift keen glance, which he felt strike him like the cut of a lash.

"You will now be able to pay for your fencing lessons, and your practice at the shooting-gallery," said the Man of Forty.

"Our galleons have come home," said Madame Vauquer, looking at the bags.

Mademoiselle Michonneau feared to let her eyes rest on the money, lest her look should betray her avarice.

"You have a kind mother," said Madame Couture.

"Monsieur has a kind mother," repeated Poiret.

"Yes, indeed; Mamma has bled herself," said Vautrin. "You will now be able to play your little games, to go into the world of fashion, to fish there for a dowry, and to dance with Comtesses who have peach-blossoms in their hair. But take my advice, young man, and learn to shoot."

Vautrin made the gesture of a man who stands in the presence of his adversary. Rastignac wished to give a gratuity to the commissionaire, but found his pockets were empty. Vautrin rummaged in his own, and threw the man twenty sous.

"Your credit is good," he said, glancing towards Rastignac.

Rastignac had to thank him, although he found the man insufferable now, ever since the day when they had had the sharp exchange of words

after Eugène's return from visiting Madame de Beauséant. During those eight days Eugène and Vautrin had been silent in each other's presence, and observed one another closely. The student asked himself why, but could not answer. But no doubt ideas have a power of projecting themselves, and impinging upon surrounding minds, that is in direct ratio to the mental energy at play in their conception, and they go forth and strike the mark at which the brain has aimed them by a law as mathematically sure as that which determines the path of the bomb when it issues from the mortar. The effect of their impact varies greatly in different objects. There are tender natures into which they plunge, and tear and lacerate them piteously; but there are natures, again, of triple robustness, and protected like a fortress, skulls like an iron rampart, against which the volitions, the mental projectiles of other men, are flattened and drop to the ground, like musket-shot against strong masonry: and yet again there are natures so flaccid, and of such mushy fibre, that the vigorous ideas of other minds strike there and are lost, as the cannon ball buries itself in the earthwork of a redoubt. For Rastignac, he had one of those heads that are like a powder magazine, and go off at the slightest shock. He was too quick with life, too full of the fire of youth, not to be sensitive to these emanations, these projected ideas, this contagion of subjective states of thought and feeling which produces so many strange results, and affects ourselves when we least know of it. If he had the glance of a lynx, his mental vision went as far, and saw as clearly as his bodily eye. Each of his perceptive faculties had that mysterious range and distance, that aptitude for going forth and

ever returning home again, which baffles our understanding in all the men of supreme capacity, those redoubtable fighters, who will find the weak joint of every adversary's armour with the swiftness and certainty of fate. Add to this, that during the last month both the qualities and the defects of Eugène had been undergoing a course of development. As to his defects, they were forced upon him by his contact with the world and by the effort to realise his increasing demands upon life. Among his qualities, his strong points, was to be counted that vivacity of intention, that high-spirited haste which impels the man of Southern France to resolve his difficulties by marching right up to them, and which forbids him to remain in uncertainty for a moment about anything whatever. The people north of the Loire name *this* quality a defect; they will tell you that if it was the source of Murat's greatness, it was also the occasion of his fall. From which we may conclude that when the Southern is wise enough to enforce with the cunning of the North the fearless courage of his own countryside, then he is verily complete, and may continue to rule his Kingdom of Sweden. But to return. Being what he was, Rastignac could not remain long under the fire of Vautrin's batteries without knowing whether this man was his friend or his enemy. Again and again he felt that this strange being was piercing to the secret of his passions, reading the thoughts of his heart, and yet all the while he allowed to others no glimpse of knowledge regarding himself, but remained deep and immovable as the Sphinx, which knows and sees everything, and says never a word. Feeling the money in his pocket, Eugène at once rebelled.

"Be good enough to wait a minute," he said

to Vautrin, who was rising to go, after taking off the last sips of his coffee.

"What for?" asked the Man of Forty: at the same time he put on his broad-brimmed hat, and took up his sword-stick, which he would sometimes flourish and twirl like a man who would not fear the onset of a quartet of foot-pads.

"I am going to pay you back," answered Eugène. He quickly opened one of the bags and counted over a hundred and forty francs to Madame Vauquer. "Short reckonings make long friends," he remarked to the widow: "this makes us clear to New Year's Eve. Give me change for this five-franc piece."

"Long friends make short reckonings," repeated Poiret, looking towards Vautrin.

"Twenty sous," said Rastignac, holding out a coin towards the sphinx in a peruke.

"One would suppose that you were afraid to be in my debt for a trifle."

"Well. . . yes!" answered the student, who stood with his two bags in his hands, ready to go upstairs.

Vautrin made as if to go out by the door opening into the salon, and the student turned to go through the doorway which led into the square hall at the foot of the staircase.

"Do you know, Monsieur le Marquis de Rastignacorama, that what you have said to me is not exactly polite?" said Vautrin, who had slammed the salon door, and approached the student, who looked at him coldly.

Rastignac closed the dining-room door behind them, and drew Vautrin towards the foot of the staircase. They now stood in the little square hall that separated the dining-room from the kitchen, and was lighted by an oblong (and iron-

barred) fanlight over the door which led into the garden. The student said, in the hearing of Sylvie, who issued from her kitchen just then:

"*Monsieur* Vautrin, I am not a Marquis, and my name is not Rastignacorama."

"They are going to fight," said Mademoiselle Michonneau, with an indifferent air.

"To fight!" repeated Poiret.

"Not at all," answered Madame Vauquer, caressing her pile of coins.

"But see! they have gone down to the lime trees!" cried Mademoiselle de Taillefer, starting up to look into the garden. "The poor young man—and he was in the right, you know, anyhow," she said.

"Let us go, my dear child," said Madame Couture. "These matters do not concern us."

As Madame Couture and Victorine were leaving the room, they encountered fat Sylvie in the doorway, who barred their passage.

"Whatever is the matter!" she exclaimed. "There is M. Vautrin has said to Monsieur Eugène, 'Let us have an explanation!' Then he took him by the arm, and now there they are, marching through our artichokes."

At this moment Vautrin appeared in the room.

"Mamma Vauquer," he said, smiling, "don't you be alarmed. I am going to try my pistols under the lime trees."

"O, monsieur!" said Victorine, clasping her hands, "why do you wish to kill Monsieur Eugène?"

Vautrin stepped two paces backward, and looked musingly at Victorine.

"What, another little tale!" he cried, in bantering tones, while the young girl blushed: "He is a very nice young man, our Monsieur Eugène,

now is he not?" he continued. "You put thoughts into my head. I shall make the happiness of you both, my pretty child."

Madame Couture had already taken her ward by the arm, and dragged her away, saying in her ear all the while:

"Why, Victorine! you are *inconceivable* this morning!"

"I won't have people firing pistols in my place," said Madame Vauquer. "Don't you go to alarm the whole neighbourhood, and be bringing in the police, I tell you."

"Come, calm yourself, Mamma Vauquer!" answered Vautrin. "There, there—it's all right! We shall go to the shooting gallery."

He rejoined Rastignac, and laying his hand familiarly on the young man's arm, said:

"When I have let you see that at thirty-five paces I can send a bullet through the ace-spot five times running, I know quite well that that won't take away your courage. You seem to me to be a little wild with rage, and you will go and have yourself killed like a fool."

"You are drawing back," said Eugène.

"Don't heat my blood," answered Vautrin. "Come, it isn't a cold morning, let us sit down yonder"—and he pointed to the green painted garden-seats. "Nobody will hear us there, and I have things to talk to you about. You are a good little sort of young man, to whom I don't wish any harm. I like you, on the word of Tromp. . (thunder!) the word of Vautrin. Why I like you, I shall tell you presently. In the meantime, understand that I know you as well as if I had made you, and am now going to prove it. Lay your bags down there," he added, pointing to the round table.

Rastignac put his money on the table and sat down. Every other feeling was absorbed in the immense curiosity awakened in him by this sudden change in the tone of a man who had talked a minute ago of killing him, and now posed as his protector.

"You would like to know who I am, what I have done, or what I do now," said Vautrin. "You want to know too much, my good boy—Come, don't be angry; you're going to hear lots more of the same kind! I have had misfortunes. Listen to me first, and you shall reply later. Here is my past life in three words. Who am I? Vautrin. What do I do? What I like. Let us pass on. Do you wish to know my character? I am good to those who are good to me, or whose hearts speak to mine. These may do what they like with me: they may come and kick my shins, and I'll never even say to them 'Look out!' But, *nom d'une pipe!* I am as ill-contrived as the Devil against those who cross me, or whom I don't take to. And I may as well tell you now that I think no more about killing a man than *that*"—and he spat from him as he spoke. "Only, when it is absolutely necessary to kill him, I do my best to kill him properly. I am what you call an artist. I have read the Memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini, simple as I stand here, and in Italian, too! He was a high-spirited blade, I tell you, and he taught me something. He taught me to follow the example set by Divine Providence, which strikes us down right and left; and to love the beautiful wherever I found it. And is it not, anyhow, a beautiful part to play in life—to stand alone against all the world, and still to have the luck on your side? I have thought a great deal, and deeply, about the present condition and make-

up of your social disorder. My lad, the duel is a stupidity, a game for children. When it is necessary that one or other of two living men should disappear out of life, who but a fool would leave it for chance to decide which of them is to go? The duel—it is an affair of heads-or-tails, that is all. I can put five bullets in succession through the ace-spot on a card, driving each new bullet on top of the last one, and at thirty-five paces, mind you! When one is gifted with a little talent like that, one may reckon on killing one's man, you would say. Very well, I have aimed at a man at twenty paces and missed him. The fool had never had a pistol in his hand before, and yet—see here!" exclaimed this extraordinary man. He undid his waistcoat and laid bare his chest, which was coated with a tawny fell, and shaggy withal as a bear's back. The sight affected Eugène with a feeling that was half repulsion and half fear. "This 'prentice-hand singed my fur for me, all the same," he added, drawing Eugène's finger along a trench in his chest. "But in those days I was a child; I was just your age, one-and-twenty. I still believed in one or two things, then; in the love of a woman, and a lot of fool's-nonsense that you are on the way to drown yourself in. But we were going to fight, were we not?—and you see you might have killed me. Suppose me under the earth: where would you be then? You would have to make off, go to Switzerland, and eat Papa's money; and he has none to spare. I am going to show you the position you are in, lest you do not see it clearly yourself; but I do so with the mental advantages that belong to a man who has looked closely into the affairs of this world, and has seen that there are only two

ways between which to choose: the way of blind obedience or the way of revolt. For me, I obey nothing—is that clear? And now: do you know what you have need of, you, at the rate at which you are going? A million, and immediately: without which it is possible that we, and that little head of ours, may be sauntering some day in the nets of Saint Cloud, on our way to find whether there is a Supreme Being or no. Well, I am going to give you that million."

He paused a moment, with his eyes fixed on Eugène.

"Ha, ha! You look more pleasantly on your little Papa Vautrin now! At the mention of that million, you are like a young girl to whom somebody has said: "Till to-night, then"—and she goes about her toilet purring like a cat over a dish of milk. Well and good: but come and let us—we two alone here—just see how your account stands at this moment. This, young man, is what I make it. We have got, down yonder, a Papa; a Mamma; a Grand-Aunt; two sisters, ages 18 and 17; two little brothers, ages 15 and 10—and that is the roll-call of the ship's crew. The Aunt educates the sisters, and the Curé comes to teach the two brothers their Latin. The family partakes oftener of boiled chestnuts than of white bread, and Papa is very careful of his clothes, while Mamma barely allows herself one dress for winter-wear, and another for summer. And our sisters do what they can. I know it all; I have been in the South. That, I say, is how things are at home, since twelve hundred francs a-year are sent to you, and three thousand francs make up the whole revenue of the estate. We have a cook and a man-servant; for Papa is a Baron, and one must respect appearances. As for us,

we have our ambitions. We have the Beauséants for relations, yet we walk through Paris a-foot; we desire riches, and we haven't a sou; we eat the dubious stews which Mamma Vauquer sets before us, and love so much the grand dinners of the Faubourg Saint-Germain; we sleep on a pallet bed in the Mansion Vauquer, and we desire a seignorial mansion. I do not blame those desires of yours. To have ambitions, dear heart, is something not given to everybody, mark you. Look at women, and see who are the men they go after—always the ambitious. The reins of ambitious men are stronger, their blood more rich in iron, their hearts more warm than those of other men. And because a woman finds that she is herself most happy and most beautiful in the hour when her own energies are fullest, therefore she prefers before all other men the man whose strength is exceptional or enormous, even though she stands in peril of being crushed by it. I have made that inventory of your desires in order to put a question before you. The question is this: we have the hunger of a wolf, and our new young teeth are very sharp—what are we to do with ourselves in order to keep our little stewpot filled? To begin with, we have the Code to chew. It is not amusing, and it doesn't increase one's knowledge; but it cannot be passed over. All right. We qualify ourselves for the Bar and become an advocate, in the hope of becoming some day the President of a Court of Assize, when we shall send poor devils—who are better men than ourselves, all the same—to the galleys with a T. F.* on their shoulder, all to assure the rich that they may

* Travaux forcés = penal servitude.

safely sleep in peace. It is not very merry, and you are a long time getting there. First there are the two years of drudgery in Paris, with all the sweetmeats we are so fond of daily before our eyes, but never, never to be touched or tasted. To be always desiring and never having—it is very wearing. If you were a pale creature with the nature of a mollusc, you would have nothing to fear. But we have the fevered blood of a lion, and appetite enough to fall into twenty follies a-day. You will succumb, then, to this torture, the most ghastly one revealed to us on this earth, which is the good God's Inferno. Let us suppose, however, that you are extremely sensible, and that you drink nothing but milk, and exercise your soul only in elegies—it would still mean that after having gone through a discipline of dreariness and privation that would drive a dog mad, you will have to make a beginning—you, with your warm and energetic nature—by becoming some kind of sheriff's substitute and the deputy of a jack-ass in a hole of a place where Government will give you a thousand francs a year—or throw it at you, as the scraps are thrown at the butcher's dog. Thereafter, mind well that you bark at all thieves, plead the cause of the rich, and send men of good heart to the guillotine. Many thanks! If no powerful influence is at work for your advancement, you will rot in your provincial tribunal. When you are about thirty, you will be a Justice with twelve hundred francs a year, if you have not pitched your gown over the hedge before then. By the time you have reached forty, you will be able to marry some miller's daughter, an heiress with about six thousand livres of income. Thank you again! But if you have influence in your favour,

you will be a Public Prosecutor at thirty, and with your salary of a thousand crowns, you will marry the Mayor's daughter. If you practise some truckling little meanness in the course of politics, such as reading Villèle instead of Manuel, when you've got to announce to the people the contents of a bulletin (the names rhyme, you notice, and that will keep your conscience right) then you may be a Procureur Général, with the chance of becoming a Deputy. But observe, my dear boy, that we shall by this time have made some bad rents in our conscience, that we shall have endured twenty years of joylessness and hidden privation, and that our sisters will have joined the Order of Saint Catherine.* I have further the honour to point out to you that there are only twenty Procureurs Généraux in France, and that there are twenty thousand aspirants for that position, and that among those there are a good many of the kind of fellows who would sell their own fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers to screw their own fortunes a peg higher. If the career seems distasteful, let us see what else there is. Can the Baron de Rastignac become an Advocate and seek his career in that? A lovely thought! You will have to toil for ten years, spend a thousand francs a month, have a collection of law books, keep chambers, mix with society, kiss the hem of a solicitor's gown for the sake of getting briefs, and lick the dust from the floor of the Palais-de-Justice with your tongue. And if it all brought you any good, I would not say no; but can you find me in the whole of Paris five advocates who, at the age of

* *i.e.* become old maids.

fifty, are making more than fifty thousand francs a year. Bah! Rather than belittle my soul to such poor purpose as that, I'd take to the sea and turn pirate. Besides, where are you going to find the money for that kind of life? The situation looks dismal, and there seems no other resource for us than a wife's dowry. Are you willing to marry? You will be hanging a stone about your neck, remember; and if you marry for money, what becomes of our fine sentiments of honour, our pride of good birth? As well begin your revolt against the conventions of the world here and now, if that is to be the way. And perhaps it would be nothing, to lie coiling like a serpent before your wife's eyes, and to lick her mother's feet, and to do all the dirty little things that would sicken a sow—pah!—if you found happiness in them at any rate. But you will be as miserable as a dripping-stone with a woman whom you have married in that way. One had far better be at war with mankind than live in continual conflict with one's own wife. These, then, are the cross-roads of life, young man, and you must choose your way.

"But you have already chosen! You have been to the house of our Cousin de Beauséant, and there you have been awakened to what splendour is. You have been to the house of Madame de Restaud, the daughter of Père Goriot, and there the Parisienne has dawned upon your senses. On that very day you returned here with one word written on your brow, a word which I could read easily: 'Success! Success, at whatever price!' 'Bravo!' thought I, 'there's the kind of fellow I like.' Well, you needed money—and where were you to find it? You have bled your sisters. Excuse me, all

brothers, more or less, take advantage of their sisters. Your fifteen hundred francs—gathered together, God knows how! in a country-side that grows more chestnuts than five-franc pieces—will slip away from you one by one like soldiers gone off in search of loot. Then, what will you do? Work? But *work*, in the sense in which you mean it, is only good for ensuring to young fellows of the calibre of Poiret a lodging with Mamma Vauquer in their old age. The problem that fifty thousand young men in your position are setting themselves to solve at this moment is, How to make a fortune *rapidly*. You are a single unit in that multitude—judge, then, what efforts you will have to make, how terrible is the carnage in that battle. You will have to devour one another like spiders in a jar; for there are not fifty thousand good places. Do you know how a man makes his way through that crowd? By the smiting force of genius, or by the cunning of corruption. You must project yourself into that mass like a cannon-ball, or glide among them like a plague. Honesty is of no use here. People bend before the power of genius. They hate it, they try to slander it, because it takes and goes shares with nobody; but if it insists, they bend before it—in a word, they worship it on their knees when they have tried in vain to stifle it in the mire. Corruption is plentiful, talent is rare. So, corruption is the weapon of the mediocrity that abounds, and you will feel the point of it everywhere. You will see women who spend more than ten thousand francs a year on dress, and yet the husband's income amounts to no more than six thousand. You will see officials buying places in the country on a salary of twelve hundred francs. You will see women

prostituting themselves that they may be seen in the carriage of the son of a Peer of France when it drives, as only such may drive, up the middle avenue at Longchamps. You have seen already how that poor old numskull of a Père Goriot has had to redeem the bill of exchange which his daughter had endorsed, whose husband has fifty thousand livres a year. I defy you to walk two paces in Paris without coming up against some infernal machinations; and I will wager my head against one of these tops of lettuce that you yourself will be landed in the thick of a hornet's nest in the case of the first woman you take to, be she rich, beautiful or young, as she may. They all lie open to a back-stroke of the law, are all at war with their husbands on every issue. But I should never have done if I tried to tell you all the tricks and traffic they have recourse to for the sake of their lovers, for the sake of dress, for the sake of children, or to keep the house going, or to gratify some vanity; and very rarely, you may take it, are the means virtuous means. So, the honest man is the enemy of all. But who, think you, is the honest man? In Paris, the honest man is he who keeps his mouth shut and holds on to what he has got. I do not speak of those poor Helots who toil all the world over and never see the reward of their toil—those whom I call the Brotherhood of the Good God's Old Shoes. Theirs is virtue, if you like; it is virtue in all the efflorescence of its stupidity; but also it is very very poor. I can see, now, the rueful face that these good fellows will make should God play upon them the practical joke of not appearing at the Last Judgment! Well, if you wish to succeed quickly, you must either be rich already or give the impression that you are rich. To get riches

in Paris, you must play for big stakes; once operate in little deals, and—you're everybody's humble servant till you die. If among the hundred professions to which you might address yourself there are ten men who have attained success rapidly, you will find that the public call them thieves. You may draw your own conclusions. I have shown you life as it really is. It is no prettier than the kitchen, and smells quite as rankly, and if you want to cook your own dinner you must not mind dirtying your hands. Only, take good care you clean yourself nicely before you come out of it; there is the whole morality of our time. If I talk like this of the world, it has given me a right to talk, for I know it. Do you suppose I blame it? Nothing of the kind. It has always been like that, and the moralists will never change it. Man is imperfect, and at some times he is more, or less, a hypocrite than at others. Then the fools say that at such an epoch the morality of the world was high or low! Nor do I declare against the rich in favour of the common people; man is the same, high, low, and in the middle state of life. In every million of those Higher Animals—the Human Race—there are some ten brave fellows who will not be subject, but place themselves on top of everything, even the Law. I am one of them. And you, if you are a better man than the crowd about you, walk straight to your aim and hold your head high. But you will have to fight against envy, and calumny and mediocrity——against the world, that is. Napoleon himself once had to do with a Minister of War—Aubry was his name—who all but had him packed off to the Colonies. Sound yourself well; see whether you are going to be capable of rising

every new morning with a more vigorous will than you had the day before. For if that be so, I am going to make you such an offer as nobody would think of refusing. Listen now.

"I also, you must understand, have an idea of what I would be at. My idea is to go off and live the patriarchal life in the midst of a wide domain —a hundred thousand acres, say—in the Southern States of America. I mean to be a planter and to have slaves, to make a few small millions by selling my cattle, my tobacco, and my timber. I mean also to live as an absolute monarch, doing what I like, and living a life which cannot even be imagined by the poor wretches who crouch here in their burrows of lath and plaster. I am a Great Poet, but I do not write my poems; they consist in actions and sentiments. Well, I possess at this moment fifty thousand francs, a sum which would buy me barely forty negroes. I need two hundred thousand francs, because I wish to have two hundred negroes, in order that my taste for the patriarchal life may be fully satisfied. Negroes, you see, are one's children, a sort of family ready found, and one does what one likes with them, where there's no *Procureur de roi* to come poking his nose and asking questions. Having this Black Capital then, I ought to make three or four millions in the course of ten years. If I succeed, nobody will say to me, 'Who are you?' I shall be M. Four Millions, Citizen of the United States. I shall be fifty years old then, still quite free from decay, and I shall amuse myself in my own fashion. In a couple of words, if I find you an heiress with a million, will you give me two hundred thousand francs? Twenty per cent. commission, eh? Is that too dear? You will

have brought your little wife to love you very much. Once married, you will begin to show signs of anxiety, remorse; for a couple of weeks or more you wear a depressed look. Then, one night, after some monkeyings and make-believes, you will confess to your wife, between two kisses, and calling her your Love, that you owe two hundred thousand francs. This sort of farce is played every day by young men in the highest walks of life and fashion. And when a young woman has given a man her heart, she does not refuse him her purse, you may be sure. Do you think that this would be a clean loss of money to you? Not at all; for you would find the means of recouping yourself and making good your two hundred thousand francs in a single business venture. With your capital and your brains, you are free to amass a fortune as large as you may desire. *Ergo*, in the space of six months you will have made things very pleasant for yourself, and for a loving wife, and for your Papa Vautrin, to say nothing of your own family—which, meanwhile, blows upon its fingers in winter days, in the absence of wood to make a fire with. And don't be astonished, either at what I offer you, or at what I ask. Of every sixty-five marriages that take place in Paris, some forty-seven have been the subjects of a little arrangement like this of ours. The Chamber of Notaries compels the happy man. . . "

"And what must I do?" asked Eugène eagerly, interrupting Vautrin.

"Almost nothing," replied the other, with a quick involuntary gesture that betrayed a joy like that of the angler who feels a bite at his line. "Follow closely what I say. When a young girl is unhappy and living in wretched-

ness, her heart is a sponge that is a-thirst for love; a dry sponge, that will begin to expand at the first drops of sentiment that fall and touch it. To make love to a young girl whose conditions of life are made up of loneliness and despair and poverty, and who does not even dream that she has a fortune coming to her—why, good heavens! it is quinte and quatorze in your hand, it is knowing the winning numbers in the lottery, it is making a deal on the Stock Exchange when you've got the news all to yourself. On such a pile-work as *that*, you may build a marriage-project which nothing can destroy. Let this young girl inherit millions, and she will throw them at your feet as if they were pebbles. 'Here, my dearest! Here, Adolphe! Here, Alfred! Here, Eugène!'—that's what she will say if Adolphe, Alfred, or Eugène, has had the good sense to sacrifice himself for her. When I say 'sacrifice himself,' I mean—sell an old coat that he may be able to take her to the *Cadran Bleu*, where they will eat mushrooms on toast together, and then go in the evening to the Ambigu-Comique: or it is pawning your watch, to make her a present of a shawl. I say nothing of other things which women take such account of, such as sprinkling a few drops of water on the note-paper to indicate that you are in tears because of her absence. You look to me to be quite well acquainted with the argot of the heart. Paris, you see, is like a forest in the New World, inhabited by twenty different savage tribes, Illinois, Hurons, and the rest, who live on the produce of various kinds of social hunting. You are a hunter of millions; and by traps and snares and lures you seek to come by your chosen quarry. But there are more kinds of hunting

than that. Some hunt heiresses, others go after legacies; some fish for the possession of souls, and others sell their clients, tied hand and foot. He who returns from the hunting with his bag well-filled is saluted, fêted and welcomed by the best society. Yes, let us do justice to this hospitable soil! You have to do with the most complaisant city in the world. Let the haughty aristocracy of all the capitals in Europe refuse to admit into their ranks a millionaire of evil fame, if they like; Paris at least will open her arms to him, will crowd to his banquets, will eat his dinners, and clink glasses with his infamy."

"But where are we to find such a girl?" asked Eugène.

"You have found her already; she is before your eyes."

"Mademoiselle Victorine?'

"Exactly."

"But how do you mean?"

"She loves you already—your little Baronne de Rastignac!"

"She has not a sou," answered Eugène in bewilderment.

"Ah, now we are coming to it. Two words more," said Vautrin, "and everything will be made clear. Her father, Taillefer, is an old rogue who is believed to have assassinated one of his friends during the Revolution. He is one of your fellows who set up for having opinions of their own; a banker, and principal partner in the firm of Frédéric Taillefer and Company. He has an only son, to whom he means to leave his whole estate, to the prejudice of Victorine. Well, I don't like to see that sort of injustice done; I am like Don Quixote, and delight to take up the defence of the weak against the strong. If it

were God's will to deprive him of his son, Taillefer would take back his daughter. He would wish, you see, to have somebody to leave his money to—a stupid craving, but it is human nature—and he cannot have any new issue, as I happen to know. Victorine is gentle and winning. She will soon be able to twist her father round her finger, and will make him spin like a German top, plying no other whip than pretty sentiment to move him. She will be too affected by your love to be able to forget you, and you will marry her. I take on me to play the part of Providence for you both, or Providence will do my bidding. I have a friend whom I have attached very closely to me, a Colonel in the army of the Loire, who has just been transferred to the Garde Royale. He has taken my advice and become ultra-royalist; he is not one of your fools who stick to their opinion. If there is one other piece of advice I would like to give you, my dear boy, it is this: don't stick to your opinions any more than to your words. If anybody wants them from you, sell him them. The man who prides himself on never changing his opinion, is like a man who should commit himself to walk in a straight line all his life, or an idiot who believes in infallibility. There are no such things as principles, there are only events. There are no such things as laws; there are only circumstances with which we have to deal. The man of superior mind marries himself to the events and circumstances of his own time, in order that he may lead them where he likes. If there were universal principles and fixed laws of things, we should not see the nations changing them as often as we change our shirts, and the mere individual is under

no obligation to be wiser or more profound than the nation to which he belongs. Amongst living men, the one who has rendered the smallest amount of service to France is, today, the adored of the Nation, because all his life he has seen everything in red; yet, when all is spoken, he is only good to stick in the Museum of Arts and Crafts among the automatons, with a ticket to say that this is La Fayette. Again, the Prince at whom anyone casts his stone, and who has contempt enough for mankind to spit in its face all the oaths it asks of him, *this* is the man* who prevented the partition of France at the Vienna Congress—and those who ought to come to him with garlands have bespattered him with mud. Oh, I know public affairs, believe me, and I hold the secrets of many men. As for unalterable opinions, I shall have one on the day that I find three minds in agreement as to the application of a single principle; which won't be very soon. Even in the Higher Courts of Law you will not find three Judges who are at one in their reading of a single section. But to return to my man; he would put Jesus Christ on the cross again if I told him to. At a word from his Papa Vautrin, he will pick a quarrel with this creature who won't send even five francs to his sister, and . . ."

Here Vautrin rose to his feet, put himself in the posture of a fencing-master in the act to lunge, and—

"Into the Dark!" he said

"How horrible," exclaimed Eugène. "Or are you jesting, M. Vautrin?"

"There, there—be calm!" replied this strange

* Metternich, to wit.—Tr.

man. "Don't play the child! Or, if it amuses you, by all means! Wax indignant, work yourself into a fury—declare that I am a wretch, a scoundrel, a rogue, a bandit, anything you like except a blackleg or a spy. Come, fire it all out, let's have a broadside! I pardon it in you, for it is natural at your age. I was like that myself once. Only, consider this, that you will do worse one day yet. You will go to some house, and you will philander with the pretty mistress thereof, and you will take money from her. You have thought of it already," he continued. "For how are you to succeed, if love does not back your bills or change to cash? Virtue, my dear student, is not a thing of halves or parts. It either is, or is not, altogether. To be sure there is repentance for sin, they tell us—and a pretty system of morality *that* is by which an act of contrition gives you quittance of a crime committed! But do you think that to seduce a woman in order to gain the power of placing yourself upon a certain rung of the social ladder—or that to sow dissension among the children of a family—or that to descend to every sort of infamy that is practised under a roof or in the open world for the sake of selfish pleasure or of self-advancement—do you think that these are the acts of faith and hope and charity? Why are there two months of imprisonment for the swell who, in a single night, purloins half his fortune from a minor, a child—and the hulks, no less, for a poor devil who steals a thousand-franc note with aggravating circumstances? These are your laws, and there isn't an article of them but runs to absurdity. Your man with kid gloves on his hands and kid-glove terms in his mouth is guilty of murders in which he has shed no blood, but somebody has bled for all

that; your ruffian has opened a door with the aid of a jemmy—and both deeds are the transactions of a night. Between what I offer you, and what you will yourself do some day, there is no difference except the little blood-shedding that I arrange for. Do you believe there is some fixed principle or moral causation in that social world that you are aiming at? Make it your principle, then, to despise mankind, and to look out for the meshes by which one can pass through the network of the Code—and be sure that the secret of every great fortune which you cannot at once account for is a *crime* that has been overlooked because it was properly carried through."

"Silence, sir! I will hear no more of this. You will cause me to doubt myself. Such as I am, my sentiments are all my science of life to me."

"As you like, my good child," replied Vautrin. "I thought you were stronger; but I shall say no more to you. One last word, however"—and he looked hard at the student—"you have my secret," he said.

"A young man who refuses your offer will know how to forget it."

"That is well said—it does me good to hear a word like that. Somebody else, you see, will be less scrupulous. Think over what I have offered to do for you, and I will let the offer stand for fifteen days. Then you may take it or leave it."

"What an iron head that man has!" thought Rastignac, as he watched Vautrin walk quietly away, his cane under his arm. "Yet what he has told me in the crudest terms, Madame de Beauséant said in more conventional form. He seemed to rake my heart with claws of steel. Why am I going to Madame de Nucingen? He has divined my motives at the very moment of their concep-

tion. In a word, this brigand has told me more about virtue than I have ever learned from men or books. And if virtue admits of no compromises, then," he said, throwing his money-bags on the table, "I have robbed my sisters, it seems."

He sat down and remained plunged in bewildered meditation.

"To be faithful to the ideal of virtue—a sublime martyrdom! Bah, all the world believes in virtue, but who is virtuous? Even so, the nations make an idol of Liberty; but what nation on the face of the earth is free? My youth is still about me like a blue and cloudless sky; but if I desire to be great or rich, must I not resolve to lie, to fawn, to grovel, to swagger, to flatter, dissemble? Must I not consent to be the flunkey of those who have lied and fawned, and grovelled in their day? Who would rise to be their accomplice must begin by being their servant. Then, I say, No! I wish to work honourably, and purely; I am willing to work day and night, and to owe my success to nothing but my labour. That will be, indeed, a slow success, but I shall lay my head on my pillow undisturbed by any guilty thoughts. What is more splendid than to look on one's own life and find it pure as a lily? I and my life, we are like a young man and his sweetheart to each other. Vautrin has shown me what only comes after ten years of marriage. Heavens! my head is in a muddle. I shall not try to think at all; the heart is a good enough guide."

Eugène was recalled from his reverie by the voice of fat Sylvie, telling him that his tailor had arrived. He went into this artist's presence with a bag of money in either hand, and was not sorry that it happened so. When he had done fitting

on his dress clothes, he put on his new morning suit, which completely metamorphosed him.

"I am quite equal to M. de Trailles," he said to himself. "In short, I do look a gentleman."

"Monsieur," said Père Goriot, presenting himself in Eugène's doorway, "you asked me if I knew the houses where Madame de Nucingen is visiting?"

"Yes."

"Well, she goes next Monday to the Maréchal Carigliano's ball. If you are able to go there, you will tell me if my daughters have enjoyed themselves well; and how they were dressed, and —everything."

"How do you come to know that, my good Père Goriot?" asked Eugène, seating the old man by the fire.

"Her maid told me; I hear of everything they do from Thérèse and Constance," he answered gleefully.

The old man was like a lover, still young enough to be made happy by a stratagem which establishes between himself and his mistress a constant communication which she knows nothing of.

"You will see them, you!" he said, artlessly betraying a pang of envy.

"I do not know," answered Eugène. "I am going to call on Madame de Beauséant, to ask if she can present me to the Maréchale."

Eugène was conscious of a kind of joy in the thought of presenting himself before the Vicomtesse dressed as he meant to be always dressed in future. What moralists call "the depths of the human heart," are entirely filled with such tricky thoughts and half-conscious movements of vain or self-interested motives. The manifold un-

settledness of which such eloquent things are said and written, the sudden changes, starts and returns of purpose, are all the outcome of calculations decided in the interests of our pleasure. Seeing himself now faultlessly dressed, gloved and booted, Rastignac at once forgot his virtuous resolutions. When youth turns aside from the path of rectitude it has not the courage to look upon itself in the mirror of consciousness, whereas maturer age knows its own appearance therein already; and there lies the whole difference between those two stages of life.

Quite a friendship had, during the last few days, sprung up between Eugène and his neighbour, Père Goriot. This undefined feeling of kindness was due to those same psychological causes which had created a feeling of quite contrary sort between the student and Vautrin. Whenever any philosopher shall be bold enough to set about the task of establishing the physical correlatives of mental states, he will, no doubt, find more than one proof of the essential materiality of the latter in the relations which our sentiments and dispositions establish between ourselves and the lower animals. What physiognomist is so quick to divine a character as a dog is to know whether a stranger is friendly to him or the reverse? Everybody can talk, nowadays, about the *crooked atoms*, but such expressions are truths embedded in language to testify to the philosophic futility of those who devote the work of their lives to winnowing the chaff alone of primitive words.* We *feel* that

* The tumidity into which Balzac's style will sometimes swell, yields, in this sentence, something like incoherence. The reference to the Epicurean theory of Atoms seems to carry with it reference to the supposed power of bodies (and of thought, as a

we are loved. Sentiment stamps itself upon every manner of thing and voyages through space. A Letter is a soul, it is an echo so faithful of the speaking voice, that intelligences finely touched will prize a Letter as among the richest treasures of their love. Père Goriot, whose instinctive affection had exalted him to a sort of canine sublimity of nature, was sensitive of the compassion, the wondering kindness of goodwill, the youthful impulse of sympathy stirring for him in the heart of the student. Nevertheless, this growing sense of friendship had not yet led to any interchange of confidences between them. If Eugène had declared his desire to meet Madame de Nucingen, it was not because he counted upon the old man to give him an introduction to her, but because he hoped that the old man might drop some remark which he would be able to turn to account later. Père Goriot, however, did not speak to him at all of his daughters, or only with reference to the remark which Eugène had allowed to slip from him at dinner on the day of his two visits.

"My dear sir," he said, on the following morning, "how could you have thought that Madame de Restaud was vexed with you for mentioning my name? Both of my daughters are very fond of me. I am, indeed, a very happy father. Only, my sons-in-law have neither of them behaved well towards me; and rather than that those dear ones should have any cause to suffer on account of my disagreement with their

finer kind of matter or body) to cast off "filmy membranes," or material shadows of themselves which travel everywhere and enter everything. But why those to whom the theory is a subject of scholarship and not an affair of science, should be called fools—is not so obvious.—Tr.

husbands, I have chosen to see them only in secret. From this mystery I draw a thousand pleasures which other fathers know nothing of, who are at liberty to see their daughters whenever they like. That is what I cannot do—you understand? So, whenever it is a fine day, I walk to the Champs-Elysées, after learning from the maids that my daughters are going out. I wait near the entrance, and my heart begins to beat quickly when their carriages draw near. I admire them in their beautiful dresses, and as they pass they give me a little smile, which gilds the whole world for me, as if a ray of beautiful sunlight had touched it all. I stay where I am; for I know they will come back. Then I see them the second time! The fresh air has done them good, their cheeks are rosier now, and all round me people say, "What a beautiful woman that is!" and my heart grows glad to hear it! Are they not my own flesh and blood? I love the horses which draw them, and I would gladly be the little lap-dog on their knees. I live in their happiness. Everybody has his own way of loving, and my way does nobody any harm. Why, then, should people bother themselves about me? I am happy in my own manner. Is it against the law for me to go out in the evening to look at my daughters, when they come forth from their own houses, on their way to a ball? And what a disappointment it is if I arrive too late and am told, "Madame has gone out!" Once, I waited till three in the morning to see Nasie, whom I had not seen for two days. Ah, I almost died for joy that time! Please do not speak of me at all to people, except to say how kind my daughters are to me. They are always wanting to heap all sorts of presents on me. But I will not let them.

I say, 'Keep your money; now, do! What would you have me do with it? I am in want of nothing.' In a word, my dear sir, what am I? A mere worthless dead body of a man, whose soul is always away where my daughters are. When you have seen Madame de Nucingen, you will tell me which of them you like best," added the old man, after a momentary pause, during which he watched Eugène get ready to depart. The young man was going to walk in the Tuileries until it should be time to present himself at Madame de Beauséant's.

That walk decided the whole future course of our student's life. A number of women noticed him. He was so handsome, so young, and so finely attired in such faultless taste! On beholding himself the object of a kind of attention that was almost admiration confessed, he thought no more about his sisters, nor about his aunt, despoiled of her relics, nor about his own virtuous repugnances. He had seen pass overhead that demon whom it is so easy to mistake for an angel, that Satan with jasper-coloured wings resplendent, who scatters rubies, and pours his shower of golden arrows against the palace-fronts of kings, and clothes women in purple, and invests the throne of humblest origin with a splendour that the foolish see and gape at. He had listened to the God of this world of crackling vanities, where crisping tinsel passes with us for a symbol of power. The words of Vautrin, however cynical he might feel them to be, had lodged themselves in his heart, even as in the memory of a pure young girl will linger the profile of the peddling hag at the door who lately whispered in her ear, "A lover of your own, my dear, and oceans of money!"

He loitered about till nearly five o'clock, and then went to present himself to Madame de Beauséant—and to receive one of those terrible blows to which young hearts lie open and defenceless. Hitherto the Vicomtesse had manifested to the full that polite amenity, that mellifluent graciousness which an aristocratic education imparts, but which is only at its best when it issues from the heart. But now she received him with a marked constraint of manner, and at once said in curt tones:—

"M. de Rastignac, I cannot see you; at least, not now. I have matters which." . .

An observer, and Rastignac became one at that moment, could not but read in the words, the gesture, the look, and the management of the voice, the whole history of the character, the habits and customs of a caste. Under the velvet glove Eugène felt the hand of iron; under the correct manners, the egoism, the arrogance of personality; the wood under the varnish. He heard, in fact, that phrase, I THE KING, which begins beneath the tufted canopy of the throne, and ends under the crest of the last little gentleman of family. Eugène had too readily placed implicit faith in the generous-heartedness of woman. Like all those who are at odds with their circumstances, he had signed in utter good faith that compact of generous feeling which should bind forever the benefactor to the beneficiary—a compact which has, amongst all noble natures, complete equality as its first article and postulate. But that kindness of goodwill which unites two souls in one is a divine emotion, as rare, and as little understood, as the true passion of love itself. Nevertheless, Rastignac wished to make his way to the Duchesse de Ca-

rigliano's ball, and therefore swallowed this rebuff.

"Madame," he said, speaking with feeling, "were it not that the matter on which I wished to speak to you is of some importance to me, I should not have come to trouble you. Be kind enough, I pray, to permit me to see you later. I can wait."

"Well, then, come and dine with me," she answered, with some confusion. For this lady was really as kind as she was high-born, and repented already the harshness of her first words.

Eugène was touched by this quick remorse of hers; nevertheless, he muttered inwardly as he withdrew:

"Grovel, put up with anything! What must the others be like, if she, the best of women, can in one moment wipe out all her promises of friendship, and regard you no more than an old shoe? Everyone for himself, then, shall we say? To be sure, her home is not a shop, and I have no right to have need of her. I must, as Vautrin says, become a cannon-ball."

These bitter thoughts of the student soon gave place to the pleasure which, he promised himself, he should have in dining with the Vicomtesse. Thus, by a sort of fatality, even the smallest occurrences in life were all conspiring to push him towards that career in which, as the terrible sphinx of the Maison Vauquer had told him, he should have to kill lest he should be killed, as on a field of battle, and to circumvent lest he should be circumvented; where he should have to leave behind at the entrance barrier his conscience and his heart, and assume a mask, and ply the game unhampered by human pity, and, according to the ideal of ancient Sparta, snatch at for-

tune too cunningly to be detected in the act, and so prove himself worthy of the victor's crown.

On his return, he found the Vicomtesse full of that kind graciousness which she had always shown him hitherto. They went together into the dining-room, in which the Vicomte was awaiting his wife, a room adorned with that luxury which, as everyone knows, was carried to its utmost pitch of splendour during the Restoration *régime*. M. de Beauséant, like many other tired men of the world, had few pleasures now that he cared for, save those of the table; and as his epicureanism was of the school of Louis XVIII. and the Duc d'Escars, his table presented the luxury of a double feast, the delights of what it contained, and the beauty of the whole apartment which framed it. To Eugène, who was dining for the first time in one of those houses in which the customs of social splendour are matters of every-day use and long tradition, the spectacle that met his eyes was comparable to nothing that he had ever seen before. Hitherto he had only been at balls; and fashion had lately abolished the suppers which had been wont to come at the end of the balls under the Empire, when the military men had instant need of something to restore their forces and put them in readiness to meet those calls to battle which came to them at home as well as abroad. Nevertheless, that self-possession which was such a distinction of his in later days, came to hand even now, and kept him from betraying any signs of raw amazement. But looking on all that richly-wrought silver-ware, and marking the thousand and one details of a sumptuously-set table, and enjoying for the first time a repast smoothly served in perfect silence, a man of his ardent imagination could hardly

help making comparisons between this life of equable refinement and luxury, and the hardships of that other life which he had been willing to accept that morning. For a moment, thought placed him again in the midst of the Family-Boarding House, and he conceived such a revulsion for it that he vowed he would quit the place in January; not less for the sake of cleaner lodgings, than in order to get clear of Vautrin, whose large hand seemed to be always on his shoulder. If one thinks of the thousand forms, loud or silent, with which corruption clothes itself in Paris, a man of sense might well ask what madness has induced the State to establish its schools there, and to gather to that scene armies of young people? and how it is that pretty women meet with respect there at all? and why the gold pieces displayed by the money-changers are not magically whisked away out of their wooden saucers? But again, if one thinks how few instances of crime there really are, and considers what are the misdemeanours of which young men are mostly guilty, how great, indeed, should be the respect with which we regard those patient Tantaluses of our city, who are ever fighting a great battle with themselves, and hardly ever failing to conquer. If the struggle of the poor Student with the temptations of Paris were fully portrayed, he would become the hero of one of the most dramatic themes which modern civilisation affords.

Madame de Beauséant kept looking at Eugène in a way that was an invitation for him to begin talking. But he disregarded these signs, not caring to speak in the presence of the Vicomte.

"Are you going to take me to the Italiens this evening?" she asked her husband.

"You cannot doubt the pleasure it would be to me to obey you," he replied, with a politeness of which the student did not detect the sarcastic intention; "but I have to meet someone at the Variétés."

"His mistress," thought she.

"Haven't you got d'Ajuda, then, this evening?" asked the Vicomte.

"No," she replied, shortly.

"Very well, if you must have an arm, take that of M. de Rastignac."

The Vicomtesse looked at Eugène with a smile. "I am afraid it will be very compromising for you," she said.

"'*A Frenchman loves all Peril, for all Glory dwells therein*,' as M. de Chateaubriand has said," replied Rastignac, with a bow.

A few minutes later he was being borne in a swift brougham, with Madame de Beauséant by his side, to a fashionable theatre, and it seemed as though some fairy influence placed him immediately thereafter in a box facing the stage. He found that all the lorgnettes of the house were turned towards him as he entered with the Vicomtesse, who was most charmingly attired. His mind proceeded from enchantment to enchantment.

"You have something to speak to me about," said Madame de Beauséant. "Ah, stop! there is Madame de Nucingen in the third box from ours. Her sister and M. de Trailles are on the other side."

While saying these words the Vicomtesse was looking towards the box where Mademoiselle de Rochefide should have been. When she saw that M. d'Ajuda was not there, her face lighted up in the most wonderful way.

"She is charming!" said Eugène, after looking at Madame de Nucingen.

"She has white eyelashes."

"Yes, but what a pretty, slender figure."

"She has large hands."

"And beautiful eyes!"

"Her face is too long."

"Yes, but length gives distinction to the features."

"It is lucky for her that she has some distinction there. See how she fidgets with her opera-glass, taking it up and putting it down continually. The Goriot blood shows through all her movements," said the Vicomtesse. Eugène was hugely surprised.

As a fact, although Madame de Beauséant seemed to be scanning the whole house through her glasses, and to be paying no attention whatever to Madame de Nucingen, not a single gesture of that lady escaped her. There were a great many beautiful women present: accordingly, Delphine de Nucingen was not a little flattered to notice that she engrossed the whole attention of the young, handsome, and well-dressed cousin of Madame de Beauséant. He had eyes for no one else.

"If you continue to cover her with your looks like that, you will set people talking, M. de Rastignac. You will never succeed in anything if you throw yourself at folks' heads in that way."

"My dear Cousin," said Eugène, "you have done a great deal for me already. If you wish to crown your work, I would only ask you to do me one service which will be very easy for you and will be a great matter to me. I am already a captive!"

"Already?"

"Yes."

"And to that woman?"

"Would my aspirations receive a hearing elsewhere?" he asked, looking keenly at his cousin. "Madame la Duchesse de Carigliano is a friend of the Duchesse de Berri," he went on after a pause. "You are sure to be seeing her; have, then, the kindness to introduce me to her and take me with you to the ball which she gives on Monday. There I shall meet Madame de Nucingen and begin my first skirmish."

"Willingly," she answered. "If you find her to your taste already, your love affairs are in a good way. There is de Marsay in the Princess Galathionne's box, and Madame de Nucingen is in torture or in pique. There could not be a better moment to begin with a woman, especially the wife of a banker. Those ladies of the Chaussée d'Antin are all fond of their revenge."

"What would *you* do, then, in such a case?"

"I should suffer in silence."

At this moment the Marquis d'Ajuda presented himself in Madame de Beauséant's box.

"I have made a muddle of my affairs in order to come and find you," he said. "And I tell you of it now, in order that it may not be a sacrifice."

The way in which the Vicomtesse's face lighted up with joy was an object lesson to Eugène in the expressive tokens of heartfelt love, never again to be confused with the facial affectations of Parisian coquetry. He regarded his cousin with admiration, remained mute, and gave up his place to M. d'Ajuda with a sigh.

"What a noble, what a sublime being, is a woman who loves like that!" he said to himself.

"And this man is going to forsake her for a doll! How could anyone forsake her?"

An anger like that of a child raged in his heart. He would have gladly thrown himself at Madame de Beauséant's feet. He longed to have some demonic power to snatch her up and bear her away in his heart, as the eagle will swoop down and carry to his eyrie some little white yeanling kid from the plains below. He felt humiliated to be in this great gallery of beauty without one picture that was his, a mistress of his own.

"To have a mistress and be a kind of king to her, *that* is an expression of power!" he said. And he looked towards Madame de Nucingen as a man who has been insulted eyes his enemy.

The Vicomtesse turned towards him with a look which rapidly expressed a thousand thanks for the discretion he had shown. The first act was now finished.

"You know Madame de Nucingen well enough, do you not, to introduce M. de Rastignac to her?" she said to the Marquis d'Ajuda.

"She will be delighted to meet Monsieur," replied the Marquis.

The handsome Portuguese arose and took the arm of the student, who found himself next moment in the presence of Madame de Nucingen.

"Madame la Baronne," said the Marquis, "I have the honour to present to you the Chevalier Eugène de Rastignac, a cousin of the Vicomtesse de Beauséant. You have made so profound an impression upon him that I have been fain to complete his happiness by bringing him nearer to the object of his worship."

The words were spoken with a certain air of raillery which helped to pass off the disrespect

of the meaning—a meaning which, however, if safely guarded in expression, will never make any woman angry. Madame de Nucingen smiled and offered Eugène the place which her husband had just vacated.

"I dare not ask you to remain with me, Monsieur," she said to him. "One who is so happy as to be beside Madame de Beauséant, wishes to stay there."

"But Madame," answered Eugène in a low voice, "it seems to me that if I wish to please my cousin, I shall stay with *you*." Then he added aloud. "When M. le Marquis entered, we were just speaking of you and saying how distinguished you looked."

M. d'Ajuda retired.

"So you are really going to stay with me, Monsieur?" said the Baroness. "Then we shall grow quite acquainted. Madame de Restaud had already made me quite eager to meet you."

"She must be rather false, then, I am afraid; for she has closed her door against me."

"Why so?"

"Madame, I shall be bold enough to tell you the reason; but in confiding such a secret to you, I must bespeak your indulgence for my fault. I am a neighbour of your father's. Not knowing that Madame de Restaud was his daughter I rashly referred to him—meaning no offence whatever—and found that I had thus annoyed your sister and her husband. You could hardly conceive with what displeasure the Duchesse de Langeais and my cousin have spoken of this filial undutifulness of hers. They laughed heartily when I described to them how the thing occurred. It was then, and when making comparisons between you and your sister, that

Madame de Beauséant spoke of you in the highest terms, and told me how admirably you had behaved to my neighbour, M. Goriot. And indeed, how could you help loving him? He worships you so fondly that already I am a little jealous. We spoke of you this morning for two whole hours. I was quite full of all that your father said about you, and so this evening, while dining with my cousin, I told her it was impossible that you could be so beautiful as you are affectionate. And I suppose it was that she might deal kindly towards so warm an admiration that Madame de Beauséant brought me with her this evening, telling me, with her usual kindness, that I should see *you* here."

"Why, then, Monsieur," said the banker's wife, "I already owe you a debt of gratitude. I can see we shall soon be quite old friends."

"A friendship with you, I am sure, could never be a commonplace sentiment," said Eugène; "yet I should never seek to be your friend."

Fatuities of this sort are the common coin of all beginners, but women always find a charm in them. And, indeed, it is only when read in cold blood that they sound poor and hollow, for as they are uttered they may be charged with incalculable value by the gesture, the voice, and the look of the young suitor. Madame de Nucingen thought Rastignac delightful. But as women will, who are confronted with a question so unmistakably put that no answer is possible, she evaded it by speaking of something else.

"Yes, my sister is very much in the wrong, in the way she has behaved to our poor father, who has been a Providence to us. It was not till M. de Nucingen imperatively forbade me to see my father except in the mornings, that I could bring

myself to accept that arrangement. But it has made me wretched for a long time past, and I have shed many tears over it. This violence done to my feelings, added to the other indignities of married life, has been one of the greatest causes of my domestic unhappiness. To the world's eye, I know, I am the happiest woman in Paris, but in reality I am the most miserable. You will think me mad to talk thus to you. But you know my father, and that deprives me of the right to regard you as a stranger."

"You have never known anyone, I am sure," said Eugène, "who could more eagerly desire to belong to you altogether. What is it you are all seeking, you women? Happiness," he said, answering his own question in a low thrilling voice. "Well, then, if happiness, for a woman, consists in being loved, being worshipped, having one friend to whom all her desires, her fancies, her sorrows and her joys may be confided, to whom she may reveal herself in the naked purity of her soul, with her pretty failings and her beautiful virtues, without fear of ever being forsaken—then, believe me, a heart thus full of devotion, thus forever ardent, can only be found in a young man, one who has all his illusions yet about him, one willing to die at a sign from you, one who, knowing nothing at all of the world as yet, would never seek to know more, because *you* would become the world for him. For myself—I know you will laugh at my simplicity—I came but lately from the depths of a province, entirely new to the life of cities, and having known hitherto only kind souls, beautiful in their simplicity: and I did not count at all upon love coming my way. But I chanced to call upon my cousin, and she allowed me to look

too closely into her heart—allowed me to divine, from one look there, what the thousand treasures of passion are. Henceforth I was like Cherubino, the lover of all women, biding the time when I should be permitted to devote myself to some *one* of them alone. When I entered and saw you here, I felt as if a strong current were carrying me towards you. I had thought of you so much already; but my daydreams had never shown you so beautiful as I find you to be. Madame de Beauséant told me I must not gaze at you so, all the time. But she does not know the pull upon one's heart that comes of looking at your lips so beautifully red, and your face so purely fair, and your eyes so soft and kind—ah me, I also am talking folly! But let me talk."

Women like nothing better than to be served to such pretty harangues, and the severest among them will listen attentively even when there is no answer that she dares to give. Having thus opened confession, Rastignac now went on telling his beads in a voice pitched very low—that also being a very good trick in coquetry. Madame de Nucingen smiled encouragement while the young man continued, and ever and anon she would look towards de Marsay, who was still in the Princess Galathionne's box. Rastignac stayed with Madame de Nucingen till her husband came to take her away.

"Madame," said Eugène, "I shall give myself the pleasure of calling upon you before the Duchesse de Carigliano's ball."

"If Matame infites you," said the Baron, a thickset Alsatian with a round face that expressed at once suavity and menace, "you arre sure to pe well receif'd."

"My affairs are going wonderfully well,"

thought Eugène, "seeing that she did not take fright on the spot when I asked her 'will you love me, then?' The bit is in the horse's mouth; and it's now to mount and manage." He went to say good-night to Madame de Beauséant, who had risen and was leaving the theatre, escorted by d'Ajuda. The unhappy student was not aware that the Baronne, all the while she seemed listening to him, had been deeply preoccupied about something quite different, and was awaiting even then a letter from de Marsay, one of those letters which settle a question and leave a heart torn. It was in all the gladness of his false success, then, that Eugène walked by the Vicomtesse's side as far as the peristyle of the theatre, where people were waiting for their carriages.

"Your cousin is no longer the same man," said the Portuguese with a smile, when Eugène had withdrawn. "He is going to break the bank. He is as supple as an eel, and I fancy he will go far. Who but you could have picked out for him, at the first shot, a woman who stands in immediate need of consolation!"

"But," said Madame de Beauséant, "it remains to be seen whether she still loves the lover who forsakes her."

The student made the journey from the Theatre-Italien to the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève on foot, and made many delightful plans for the future on the way. He had been struck by the amount of attention which Madame de Restaud had bestowed on him during the evening, both while he was in the Vicomtesse's box and in that of Madame de Nucingen; and he ventured to infer that the Comtesse's door would not be closed to him henceforth. Thus he was

on the way to have four points of connection—for he did not doubt but that he should make himself acceptable to the Maréchale—with the highest and innermost social world of Paris. Without troubling to explain to himself how it was to be done, he already divined that, once he had placed himself in the midst of that complicated play of interests, he should have to lay hold of some wheel or other in the whole system which, in the course of its revolutions, would bring him to the top of the machine. Once arrived there, he felt he should have strength enough to stop the downward turn and stay where he was.

"If Madame de Nucingen takes to me, I shall teach her how to manage her husband. That same husband is a speculating money-magnate, who might put me in the way of making a fortune by a single stroke of business."

He did not express it to himself quite so crudely as that, for he was not schemer enough yet to reduce a situation to a set of figures and calculate its values. Those notions were a little formless as yet, floating like vague clouds in the horizon of his mind. But if they had not the harsh and definite quality of Vautrin's thoughts, they would have yielded, perhaps, no purer a result if tested in the crucible of conscience. It is by a long series of transactions like this that men arrive at that loosening of the whole moral sense which is the mark and profession of our own epoch—an epoch which is poorer than any previous one in examples of what we may call rectangular men, those men of noble intention who are never pliant in the presence of evil, and who judge the smallest deviation from rectitude as an absolute crime—magnificent types of sheer integrity which have been set before us in two

masterpieces of Art, in the character of Molière's Alceste, and more recently in Walter Scott's Jeanie Deans and her father. Perhaps the study of the antithesis to such characters as these would yield a work of art not less beautiful nor poorer in dramatic power—a study of all the sinuosities of action and purpose through which a man of the world, directed only by his ambitions, will constrain his conscience to travel while he tries at all points along the voyage of life to sail between the wind of his wish and the headlands of dishonour, to gain his ends and yet to keep his reputation. Rastignac, at any rate, was fully enamoured of Madame de Nucingen by the time he reached the boarding-house. How swallow-like and slender she was—and her glance, so soft that it made your heart weak to look at her—and her skin, so delicate and of such silky texture that he had seen, he was sure he had seen, the blood coursing beneath it—and her voice, that was like an enchantment—and her blond hair—he kept recalling it all to mind as he went: and no doubt the physical exercise of the long walk, as it caused his blood to circulate faster, added a glow to the power of all these fascinations. He knocked sharply at Goriot's door.

"Good neighbour," he said, "I have seen Madame Delphine."

"Where?"

"At the Italiens."

"Did she enjoy herself? Do come in."

And the old man, who had risen in his shirt, opened the door and then hurried back to bed.

"Now tell me about her," he said.

It was the first time that Eugène had been in Père Goriot's room, and he could not control a

gesture of surprise on seeing the kind of hole in which the father lived, coming fresh, as he did, from the spectacle of the daughter's sumptuous toilette. There were no curtains to the window; the pattern wall-paper had come away in various places owing to the damp, and, where it wilted, laid bare the dingy, smoked plaster. The old man lay on a wretched bed, with no other covering than a thin blanket, and a quilt thrown across the foot—this quilt being made of wadding enclosed in a patchwork of Madame Vauquer's old dresses. The floor was damp and gritty. Opposite the window there was one of those old-fashioned rosewood chests of drawers, bow-fronted, with brass handles shaped to resemble vine-twigs covered with leaves and flowers. Beside it, a wooden washstand of venerable age, on which was a water-jug standing in its basin, and a set of shaving apparatus. In a corner a number of old shoes. At the head of the bed a pedestal cupboard, minus its door and its marble slab. Near the hearth, in which there was no trace of a fire, stood the square walnut table, the crossbar of which had been put to use by Père Goriot when he was engaged in destroying the shape of his silver-gilt breakfast-service. This deplorable collection of furniture was completed by a broken-down bureau, on which the old man's hat was lying, an armchair stuffed with straw, and a couple of other chairs. From the bed-pole, which was slung from the roof by a strip of rag, there hung a piece of cheap material in red-and-white checks. The poorest creature who runs errands was certainly happier in the furnishings of his garret than was Père Goriot in his abode at Madame Vauquer's. The whole look of the room chilled the blood and pressed like a

weight upon the heart: it might have been the worst cell within the walls of a prison. Fortunately, Père Goriot did not see the expression upon Eugène's face as he went up to the bed and placed his candle on the pedestal cupboard. The old man turned on his side, but kept himself covered to the chin.

"Well, now, which do you like best, Madame de Restaud or Madame de Nucingen?"

"I like Madame Delphine best," replied the student, "because she loves you most."

On hearing those words, which were spoken with some fervour, the old man stretched his arm from the bed and grasped Eugène's hand.

"Thanks, thanks!" he replied, with emotion. "Tell me, what was it she said about me?"

The student repeated the Baronne's words, with embellishments, and the old man listened as though it were to the voice of God.

"The dear child! Yes, yes; she does indeed love me! But you must not believe what she says to you about Anastasie. Those two sisters are jealous of one another, you know. It is just another sign of their love for me. For Madame de Restaud also loves me well, I know that. A father is in relation to his children what God is towards us: He sees to the bottom of their hearts, and does justice to their intentions. And both my girls are so loving—ah! if I had had good sons-in-law, I should have been too happy altogether. But I am certain that there can be no complete happiness on earth. If I had only had leave to live with them—only to hear their voices, to know that they were there, to see them go and come as I used to when they lived at home with me—ah, my heart would have run wild! . . . Tell me, were they nicely dressed?"

"Yes," answered Eugène. "But how does it come, Monsieur Goriot, that having daughters occupying such a splendid position in life as yours do, you are yet content to live in a hole of this sort?"

"Why, now," he answered, with an affectation of carelessness, "what would be the use of anything better to me? I can't well explain these things to you; for, indeed, I do not know how to string together a couple of words as they should be said. But it is all here," he added, tapping his breast. "'My life, you see, is in my two girls. If they are enjoying themselves, if they are happy, and have beautiful clothes, if they have carpets beneath their feet, what matters it what kind of clothes I wear, or what kind of place I lie down in at night? There is no cold for me if they are warm, I can never feel dreary if they are smiling. All my sorrows are only their sorrows. When you are a father, when you hear your babies prattling, and say to yourself, "And that has come from me!"—then you will feel that those little creatures are in touch with every drop of blood in your veins—for what are they but the flower of your life's blood?—you will feel that your very body cleaves to them, that they cannot walk, but you must also be moving. Their voices speak to me everywhere. One look from their eyes, if it is a sad one, will make my blood go cold. Some day you will understand how it is that I am happier in their happiness than in my own. I cannot explain it to you; but it is a something within one that sheds joy and suffuses one's whole being. In a word, I have a three-fold life. Shall I tell you something strange? Well, since the time that I became a father, I have understood God. He is Himself altogether, and is

extended through all the world; for all the world is His creation, and issued from Him. Monsieur, it is like that with me and my daughters. Only, I love my daughters better than God loves the world; for the world is not so beautiful as God, whereas my daughters are more beautiful than me. They are in such touch with my soul always that I had a feeling that you would see them this evening. If any man were only to make my little Delphine as happy as a woman becomes who is truly loved, by heavens! I would black his boots, I would run his errands. As for that little M. de Marsay, he is a cur; her maid has told me about *his* behaviour. I had half a dozen minds to twist his neck. To think of him not loving her, not loving a jewel of a woman, with the voice of a nightingale and the figure of a perfect model! But where were her eyes when she married that lumpish fool of an Alsatian? They ought, both of them, to have married young men, good-looking, and pleasant to live with. However, they had their own way."

Père Goriot was sublime. Eugène saw him now, for the first time, illuminated by the fervour of his paternal passion. And this infusing power which belongs to all exalted states of sentiment is worth a passing remark here. Let any human creature be as rude and unquickened as it may, yet when it comes under the influence of a powerful and sincere affection, which it is seeking to express, it will develop a rarefaction of all its faculties, which will re-form the countenance, animate the gesture, and give colour and depth to every tone of the voice. Often will you see a nature, that is normally sunk in stupidity, carried by the influence of passion to the greatest heights of eloquence—in the ideas expressed if not

in the shaping of words—till it seems to move above us in a sphere of light. As Père Goriot now spoke, his words and gesture were charged with that electric power of enthralment by which the great actor stands revealed. But what else are they, our better and more beautiful affections, if they be not the actual poetry of our souls?

"Well, in that case you will not be sorry to hear that she is going to break with de Marsay. That pretty fellow has left her, to go and tack himself on to the Princess Galathionne. As for me, this very evening I have fallen deeply in love with Madame Delphine."

"Nonsense!" said Père Goriot.

"It is true; and she was not displeased with me. For a whole hour we talked of love, and I am to call upon her the day after to-morrow—Saturday, that is."

"Oh, how I should love you, dear sir, if she were to care for you. *You* are kind and good—*you* would not make her miserable. If you were to be a traitor to her, I should cut your throat—at once. A woman does not love twice, remember. Heavens! I am talking nonsense, Monsieur Eugène. It is too cold for you here. Heavens! and you heard her speak? What message did she send to me?"

"*None*," thought Eugène; but "She told me," he said, aloud, "to tell you that your girl sends you a kiss."

"Good-night, neighbour! Sound sleep to you, and pleasant dreams. *Mine* are all made sure for me by that word of hers. May God favour all the wishes of your heart! This night you have come to me like an angel, and you have brought to me the very air my daughter lives in."

"Poor man!" said Eugène to himself, as he lay down. "It would move a heart of stone. His daughter thought no more of him than of the Grand Turk."

From the time of this conversation Père Goriot saw in his neighbour a personal friend and a confidant such as he had never hoped to find in the world. They were henceforth joined together by the only bonds which could connect the old man now with other men. The passions never miscalculate: and already Père Goriot saw himself a little nearer to his daughter Delphine; he saw himself being received more kindly in her house, if Eugène should indeed become very dear to the Baronne. Beside, he had confided to the student one secret cause of a special grief: Madame de Nucingen, for whose happiness he prayed a thousand times a day, had never known the joys of love. No doubt Eugène was—to use the old man's own words—one of the nicest young men he had ever seen; and he had a prophetic sense that Eugène was the lover who should bring to her all the delight that her life had hitherto lacked. In this way, then, the old man conceived a sense of kindly relationship to the student, a feeling which gathered strength as time went on, and but for which the world would certainly never have known the catastrophe of this story. On the following morning the marked manner in which Père Goriot regarded Eugène, beside whom he seated himself at breakfast, the way in which he spoke to him several times, and the change in his whole facial expression—which was wont to be as fixed as a plaster-cast—awakened the surprise of the other boarders. Vautrin, who now saw the student for the first time since their conference, seemed as if he

would like to read his soul. Eugène had had time during the night, before he fell asleep at last, to take a survey of the vast field of the world that lay before him, and to measure his own prospects therein; and the sight of Vautrin now recalling to his mind the proposal which the latter had made to him, his thoughts naturally transferred themselves to Mademoiselle Taillefer's dowry. So he could not help thinking of Victorine as the most virtuous young man may be permitted to think of a rich heiress. As it chanced, their eyes met. The poor girl did not fail to notice how nice Eugène looked in his new outfit, and the quick glance which passed between them left Eugène in no doubt that he was, for her, the object of those vague yearnings to which the nature of young girls is subject, and which are ready to attach themselves to the first man of pleasing manners and appearance who comes their way. A voice within his mind cried out "Eight hundred thousand francs!" But he threw himself back abruptly upon his recollections of yesterday evening, and sought to find in his improvised passion for Madame de Nucingen a counter-influence to the evil thoughts that beset him.

"They gave Rossini's *Barber of Seville* at the Italiens yesterday evening," he said. "I never heard such delightful music. My word, what a splendid thing it must be to have a box of one's own at the Italiens!"

Père Goriot seemed to seize Eugène's every word as he uttered it, and watched for his slightest movements as a dog watches his master.

"You are just like game-cocks, you men," said Madame Vauquer. "You do whatever you please."

"How did you come home?" asked Vautrin.

"On foot," Eugène answered.

"Well, for my part," said the Tempter, "I should not care for half-pleasures like that. I should want to go in my brougham, and sit in my box, and come home comfortably. All or nothing, that's my motto!"

"And a good motto, too," said Madame Vauquer.

"I daresay you will be going to see Madame de Nucingen," said Eugène, in a low voice, to Goriot. "I know she will receive you with open arms; and she will want to ask you a thousand little things about me. It has come to my knowledge that she would do anything to be received at the house of my cousin, the Vicomtesse de Beauséant. Do not forget to tell her that I love her too much not to think of procuring her this satisfaction."

Rastignac went off at once to the École de Droit; for he wished to stay in that hateful boarding-house as little as possible now. He loitered about in idleness nearly the whole of the day, and was entirely given up to that fever of the brain which has afflicted many other young men whose imaginations and desires outrun the conditions of their life. Vautrin's arguments had set him thinking of the actual state of society, and he was deep in his reflections when he came upon his friend Bianchon in the garden of the Luxembourg.

"Whence this thoughtful look?" said the medical student, as he took Eugène's arm, and began to walk up and down with him in front of the Palace.

"I am vexed by evil thoughts."

"Of what sort? There is a cure for such things."

"How?"

"Doing what they tell you."

"You laugh, because you do not know what it is. But have you read Rousseau?"

"Yes."

"Do you remember the passage where he asks the Reader what he would do, supposing it were put in his power to become suddenly rich by killing an old mandarin away in China—killing him by the mere act of willing his death, and without moving a step out of Paris?"

"Yes."

"Well, then?"

"Pshaw! I am at my thirty-third mandarin."

"Don't joke, but consider—supposing it was proved to you that the thing can be done, and that you have only to give a nod of your head: would you do it?"

"Is your mandarin very old?—Pshaw! Young or old, paralytic or in the vigour of life, I tell you—the deuce take it! . . . Well then, *no!*"

"You are a good fellow, Bianchon. But say: If you loved a woman well enough to go to perdition to serve her—and if she was in want of money—a great deal of money—money for dress—for carriages—for everything she could set her heart on, in fact? . . ."

"But you unhinge my mind, and ask me to reason the thing out!"

"Well, Bianchon, take it that I am mad; I want you to prescribe for me. I have two sisters; angels, both of them, for beauty and purity; and I wish them to be happy. The problem is, where am I to find, within the next five years, two hundred thousand francs for their dowry? There are occasions in life, you see, when it is one's duty to play for big stakes, and not to

waste one's chances of success on the winning of copper coins."

"You are asking the question which confronts everybody on the threshold of his life, and you want to cut the Gordian knot of circumstance with a sword. But to do that, my dear fellow, you have got to be Alexander. If you are not, you will go to the hulks. For me, I am quite content with the little scheme of life which I shall make for myself down in the provinces, where I shall succeed to my father's practice in the most uninteresting way. The affections and the needs of man's nature can be as fully satisfied within the smallest circle as in the most immense circumference of life. Napoleon could dine but once a day, and he had no greater choice of mistresses than the poor medical student who lives-in at the Capucines. Our happiness, my dear fellow, lies always between the sole of our foot and the crown of our head; and whether it costs a million louis, or a hundred louis, a year, our intrinsic perception and enjoyment of it lies within ourselves and amounts to the same thing. I vote for letting the Chinaman live."

"Thank you, Bianchon! You have done me a service. We shall always be friends."

"I say," continued the medical student, "a little while ago, when I was coming away from Cuvier's class at the Jardin des Plantes, I saw Michonneau and Poiret sitting on one of the seats in conversation with an individual whom I used to see during the troubles of last year, hanging about the Chamber of Deputies. He gives me the impression of being an agent of Police who has got himself up to resemble a retired tradesman living on his means. Let us have our eye on that couple; I will tell you my reason later on.

Good-bye, I must go and answer to my name at the four o'clock roll-call."

On returning to the boarding-house, Eugène found Père Goriot waiting for him.

"There!" said the old man. "There is a letter from her. That's pretty writing, eh?"

Eugène broke the seal and read.

"Sir,—My father tells me that you are fond of Italian music. I shall be delighted if you will do me the pleasure of accepting a seat in my box. We are to have Fodor and Pellegrini on Saturday, so I am sure you will not refuse me. M. de Nucingen joins me in asking you to come and dine with us that evening. We shall be just ourselves. If you come, you will be doing my husband a favour by relieving him of the conjugal duty of escorting me to the Opera. Do not trouble to answer, but just come.—Yours sincerely, D. de N."

"Give it me," said the old man when Eugène had finished reading. "You will go, won't you?" he added, after he had sniffed at the note-paper. "What a nice smell it has! Her fingers have been there, you can see that!"

"No woman throws herself at a man's head in this way," the student was thinking. "She wants to make use of me to bring back de Marsay. It is only pique that prompts any of them to do this sort of thing."

"Well," said Père Goriot; "what are you thinking about?"

Eugène knew nothing at all of the fever of vanity in which many of the women of that time lived, and therefore did not know that the wife of a banker was capable of making any sacrifice whatever in order to gain for herself an entrée

in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. At this period the standards of convention had placed above all other women in the social world those who were received by the ladies of the Faubourg Saint-Germain; and amongst these ladies—the Dames du Petit-Chateau, as they were called—Madame de Beauséant, her friend the Duchesse de Langeais and the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse occupied the very highest rank. Rastignac was alone in his ignorance of the passionate eagerness with which the women folk of the Chaussée-d'Antin were struggling to make their way into that social heaven wherein the constellations of their own sex reigned resplendent. But his habit of distrusting his own fortune stood him in good stead; for it both kept him cool at this juncture and gave him the power—a sorry power, when all is said—of imposing rather than accepting conditions.

"Yes, I shall go," he answered.

Thus it was curiosity that was leading him now to Madame de Nucingen's, whereas he might have been carried thither by his passion, had the lady given him less encouragement. Nevertheless, he waited with some impatience for the morrow and the hour when he should go; for a young man is capable of finding as much magic and charm in his first intrigue as in a first experience of the true passion. And the certainty of success lends to the adventure a thousand pleasures which men do not talk about, but which constitute the whole fascination exercised by certain kinds of women. Desire may be begotten not less by the ease than by the difficulty of achievement. Those two causes divide between them the whole empire of love, and by one or the other of them are all men's passions either

called into being or kept alive. This fundamental division of motives is itself, perhaps, an inevitable result of that ultimate moral fact of opposed temperaments which, whether we acknowledge it or no, makes and manages the world we live in. If the men of melancholic bias have need of the tonic stimulations of coquetry to awake them to action, the more high-strung and sanguine natures would probably leave the field of battle if discouraged by too obstinate a resistance. In other words, your elegiac souls begin in languor and your dithyrambic ones go off in spleen.

Eugène went about his toilette slowly, finding in that feast of preparation all those little pleasures which young men do not confess to, for fear of derision, but which titillate the sense of their own importance very agreeably. He arranged his hair with a distinct consciousness that the eyes of a pretty woman would have pleasure in following the path of these twining black locks. He even became guilty of those little antic graces and grimaces which a young girl will practise while dressing herself for a ball. He regarded his own elegant figure with much complaisance as he smoothed out the creases from his coat.

"It is quite certain," he told himself, "that there are less presentable figures about."

Then he went downstairs. The rest of the boarders had sat down to dinner, and greeted his appearance, thus elegantly attired, with a burst of railleries, which he accepted in good part. It is one of the peculiarities of the boarding-house mind that any exceptional care of one's appearance throws one's neighbours into a state of admiration. If one man puts on a new coat, everyone else must say his say about it.

"Chk! chk! chk!" quoth Bianchon, making that sound, with the tongue against the roof of the mouth, which is used to encourage a horse forward.

"We are dressed like a duke and a peer of France," said Madame Vauquer.

"Monsieur goes forth to conquer?" enquired Mademoiselle Michonneau.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" cried the painter.

"My compliments to Madame your wife," said the Museum official.

"Has Monsieur a wife?" asked Poiret.

"A wife in compartments, fit for land and water, warranted fast dye, any price from twenty-five to forty francs, with check patterns in the latest taste, may be washed with safety, and pretty to wear, half linen, half cotton, half wool, a certain cure for toothache and other maladies approved by the Academy of Medicine! Also excellent for infants! Still better as a remedy for headaches, indigestion, and other maladies of the throat, eyes, and ears!" cried Vautrin with comical fluency, and in the tones of a quack at a fair. "How much for this work of art? Name your own price, gentlemen. Did you say two sous? No, thank you. Not by no means. This is all that remains after supplying the Great Mogul! All the crowned heads of Europe, including the Gr-r-r-rand Duke of Baden, have wanted to have a look at it! Straight forward gentlemen, straight forward! and call at the ticket-office on your way. Now then, strike up the music there! Brooum, la, la, trinn! la la boum, boum!—Mister Clarinette, you are out of tune," he added in a hoarse voice, "I shall rap your knuckles for you!"

"Good Lord! what an amusing man to be

sure!" said Madame Vauquer to Madame Couture; "I should never feel dull with him in the house."

This comic harangue of Vautrin's was the signal for an outburst of laughter and a flood of jokes; in the midst of which Eugène was able to catch a fugitive look directed at him by Mademoiselle Taillefer, who leant towards Madame Couture and whispered some words in her ear.

"The cab is at the door," said Sylvie.

"Pray, where are we dining?" asked Bianchon.

"With Madame la Baronne de Nucingen."

"M. Goriot's daughter," said the student.

All eyes were at once turned towards the old vermicelli-maker, who was looking at Eugène with a kind of envy.

Rastignac was driven to the Rue Saint-Lazare and entered one of those insubstantial houses, with slender columns and mean-looking porticoes, which are considered the *thing* in Paris—an unmistakable banker's house, crammed with expensive fittings and furnishings, and lined with stucco, and with inlaid marble at every landing. He found Madame de Nucingen in a small drawing-room, the walls of which were decorated, much in the manner of a restaurant, with panel pictures of Italian scenery. The Baronne looked depressed; and the efforts she made to hide her trouble interested Eugène all the more keenly because he saw that she was not playing a part. He had expected to find a woman who was visibly gladdened by his arrival, and behold! he found her in despair. It was a disappointment, and his self-esteem was a little hurt.

"I have very little claim on your confidence, Madame," he said after having rallied her about

her preoccupation. "But if I am in the way, I count on your good faith to tell me frankly, and I shall go."

"No, stay with me," she said. "If you go, I shall be quite alone. Nucingen is dining in town, and I do not wish to be alone. I want relief from my own thoughts."

"But what is the matter?"

"You are the last person in the world whom I should wish to tell!" she exclaimed.

"But I want to know. Besides, I seem to count for something in this secret."

"Perhaps! But no," she continued. "It is only a domestic quarrel, and those things ought to be buried in one's own heart. Did I not tell you the other day? I am very wretched; and golden chains are the heaviest to bear."

When a woman tells a young man that she is unhappy, and if that young man is clever, and well-dressed, and has fifteen hundred francs lying idle in his pocket, then he will form the conclusions which Eugène had just expressed, and straightway become fatuous.

"What can you have to desire?" he said. "You are beautiful, young, beloved, rich."

"Let us not talk about me," she answered with a mournful shake of the head. "We shall dine together *tête-à-tête*, and then we shall go and hear the most delightful music. Am I to your taste?" she continued, rising to display her robe of white cashmere covered with Persian designs of the greatest richness and refinement of taste.

"I wish you were mine altogether," said Eugène. "You are beautiful!"

"You would have a very wretched property," she said, smiling ruefully. "Nothing in this house speaks to you of unhappiness, and yet,

despite of all that you see around you, I am in despair. I lie awake all night—my sorrows will not let me sleep. I shall become hideous."

"That could never be!" exclaimed the student. "But I am curious to know what these griefs are which a devoted love is powerless to efface."

"Ah, if I were to tell you, you would avoid me henceforth. Your liking for me now is only the kind of conventional courtship which men use towards women; but if you really loved me, the story would drive you to despair. So I must be silent. Please," she added, "let us talk of something else. Come and see my rooms."

"No, let us stay here," answered Eugène. He sat down beside Madame de Nucingen, on an ottoman in front of the fire, and took her hand in his as though he had permission to act thus.

She let it stay there; and even pressed it against his, in one of those convulsive movements which betray the inward stress of strong emotion.

"Listen," said Eugène. "If you are in trouble, you ought to let me know what it is. I mean to show you that I love you for yourself alone. Either you will break your silence and explain those troubles to me so that I may remove them—though it meant the killing of half-a-dozen men for your sake—or I shall go out of the door and never come back."

"Well, since you will have it so," she cried, putting her hand to her brow in a sudden agony of thought, "I shall put you to the proof at once. Yes," she murmured abstractedly, "this is the only way."

She touched a bell.

"Is M. de Nucingen's carriage ready?" she asked the valet.

"Yes, Madame."

"Then I shall take it. He can have mine and my horses. Keep back dinner till seven."

"Now come with me," she said to Eugène. A moment later he was sitting by her side in M. de Nucingen's carriage, wondering whether he was in a dream.

"To the Palais-Royal," she said to the coachman: "Stop near the Théâtre-Francais."

As they drove on, she appeared greatly agitated, and vouchsafed no answer to the thousand questions attempted by Eugène. He was at a loss what to think of this silence of hers, so resistent, unshakeable, obtuse.

"Another minute, and she will be gone altogether," he thought.

When the carriage drew up, the Baronne turned upon Eugène a look which silenced all his wild words, for by this time he was almost out of hand with impatience.

"Do you really love me?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered, without betraying the uneasiness which had now come over him.

"You would not think ill of me, whatever I asked you to do?"

"No."

"You are ready to obey me?"

"Blindly."

"Have you ever been to a gaming-house?" she asked, in tremulous tones.

"Never."

"Ah, now I breathe freely. You will have luck. Here is my purse," she continued. "Take it. It contains a hundred francs, the entire riches of this fortunate woman. Go into a gaming-house: I cannot direct you, but I know there are plenty of them round about the Palais-Royal. There is a game they call roulette; stake the

hundred francs at that, and either lose them all, or bring me back six thousand. When you come back I will tell you what my troubles are."

"The deuce take me if I know in the least what it is I am engaged in; but I am going to do your bidding." This he said with a kind of joyous abandon; but the joy was caused by this thought at the back of his mind: "She is compromising herself with me—and now will be able to refuse me nothing."

Taking the pretty purse, he asked an old-clothes dealer the way to the nearest gaming-house, and was directed to No. 9. He mounted the staircase, gave his hat to an attendant, on entering the suite of rooms, and asked to be shown to the roulette-room. The attendant led him up to a long table, and his approach was marked with astonishment by the *habitués* of the place. All eyes were upon Eugène as he asked, without a trace of constraint, how he was to deposit his stake. He was answered by a respectable-looking old man, with white hair.

"If you place a louis on any one of these thirty-six numbers, and it comes out, you will have thirty-six louis," he said.

Eugène placed the hundred francs on the 21, the number of his own years. Almost immediately a cry of surprise broke around him. Without knowing it, he had won.

"Take your money away," said the old man. "You won't win twice running on that system."

Eugène took a rake which the old man offered him, and drew in his three thousand six hundred francs; and then, still in perfect ignorance of the game, staked the whole sum on the red. The bystanders regarded him with envy as they saw him continue to play. The disc revolved: he

gained again; and the banker threw him other three thousand six hundred francs.

"You have seven thousand two hundred francs to the good," the old man whispered to him. "If you take my advice, you will go away now. The red has come up eight times running already. If you are charitable, you will show your gratitude for this sound advice by relieving the poverty of an old prefect of Napoleon, who has fallen upon evil days."

Eugène, thrilled and abstracted, let the man with the white locks have ten of his louis, and went downstairs with the seven thousand francs, knowing no more about the game than when he entered, and merely stupefied at his own luck.

"*That's* done!" he said, when the carriage door was closed. As he spoke, he showed Madame de Nucingen the seven thousand francs, and added: "Where are you going to take me now?"

Delphine clasped him quickly in a mad embrace and kissed him eagerly; but they were not the kisses of a woman in love.

"You have saved me!" she exclaimed, and a flood of happy tears ran down her cheeks.

"I will tell you everything, my friend. For you will be my friend, will you not? You see me, a rich woman, living in abundance, in lack of nothing, or at least, I seem to lack nothing. Very well, you must know that M. de Nucingen does not allow me the control of a single sou. All payments are made by himself: for the household, for my carriages, my box at the theatre; and for my dresses he allows me a fixed sum which is entirely insufficient, and in every way, for purposes of his own, tries to keep me in a condition of secret penury. I am too proud to beg of him: and, indeed, I should consider my-

self the meanest creature alive were I to buy his money at the price he is willing to sell it at. How, you may ask, did I, with seven hundred thousand francs of my own, allow myself to be robbed of my rights? Because my self-respect compels me, and my indignation. Ah, we are so young, we know so little, when we enter upon married life! To have asked my husband for money—the very words would have torn my lips! I could never bring myself to do it. So for a time I lived on my own savings as a girl, and on what my poor father gave me; and then I ran into debt. In my case, marriage is a horrible mockery. I cannot tell you how—enough for you to know that I would rather throw myself from the window than live with Nucingen on any other terms than those of—separate rooms. Well, a time came when I *must* tell him of my debts, a newly-wedded girl's debts for jewels, and all kinds of little fancies—my poor father had made it seem natural to us to deny ourselves nothing, you know—and I suffered agonies. But at last I plucked up courage to tell him. Besides, had I not a fortune of my own, which Nucingen has stolen? Then he broke out, and said I should be the ruin of him, said the most abominable things! I wished myself a hundred feet under the ground. However, as he had taken my dowry, he paid that time, but stipulated that for the future my personal expenses must never exceed a certain sum. I accepted for the sake of peace. But later on," she continued, "I did things to please the self-love of Somebody whom you know of. If he has not proved true to me, I ought, in justice, to own that there never was anything mean in his character. But there! He has slighted me shamefully, that is certain.

If Somebody gives a woman heaps and heaps of money in her days of difficulty, surely Somebody should never forsake *that* woman, surely Somebody should love her always! But you will ask me—you, who are young and pure, you with the beautiful soul of one-and-twenty—you will ask me how it is possible for a woman to take money from a man? *Mon Dieu!* Is it not natural to share everything with the being to whom we owe our happiness? When one has given all, who would think of making a difficulty about a portion of that all? Money becomes something in itself, a thing apart, only when the sentiment which gave and received it has ceased to exist. Is it not a life-long bond of union that we form? Which of us can foresee any separation, any end, at the moment when she is conscious of being truly loved? Or how can there be any division of interests, of possessions, when you swear an eternal devotion to us? You do not know what I suffered to-day, when Nucingen flatly refused to let me have three thousand francs. Three thousand francs!—and he gives as much as that every month to his mistress, an opera-girl. I thought of killing myself; the wildest ideas ran through my head. There were moments when I envied the lot in life of a domestic servant, of my own waiting-woman. There was my father—but it would have been madness to think of going to him. Anastasie and I have drained his blood already. Poor father! I knew he would sell himself outright if the sale would realise the sum I wanted, my three thousand francs. I should only have made him heart-broken to no purpose. You have saved me from shame and death. I was drunk with wretchedness. Ah, monsieur, I have need to give you this explana-

tion, for I have behaved madly and foolishly towards you. When you left me a little ago, and I lost sight of you, I felt that I should get out of the carriage and steal away. Where to? I do not know. You see, then, what the life of half the women in Paris consists of: luxury without, and in their souls the gnawings of anxiety. I know some poor creatures who are yet more wretched than I. Yes, there are women who are driven to ask their tradespeople to make out false bills. Others see no way but to rob their husbands. There are husbands who believe that a cashmere shawl worth a hundred louis is bought for a hundred francs, and others who think that one which was bought for a hundred francs has cost a hundred louis. There are women who stint their children of their food to scrape money for a new dress. For myself, I am guiltless of these despicable trickeries. And—to come to the last item of my torture—if some women will sell themselves to their husbands, that they may be able to manage them, from that degradation, also, I am free! I could make Nucingen heap gold around me, but I would rather weep on the breast of a man whom I could respect. Ah! to-night M. de Marsay will not have the right to think of me as a woman whom he has paid."

That Eugène might not see her tears, she buried her face in her hands. But he pulled them away, and gazed at her. She seemed sublime at that moment.

"It is hideous, is it not?" she said, "to mix up money and love in one's relations, like this! You will never be able to love me now."

This blending of that goodness and idealism of heart which make women so great, with those faults of conduct which the structure of society

forces upon them, quite overcame Eugène. He gazed in admiration at this beautiful woman, so sincerely simple, and so imprudent in her cry of pain, and spoke to her in such soothing and consoling words as she had need of.

"You will never use this against me, promise me that," she said.

"Ah, madame," he answered, "I could never do so."

She took his hand and placed it against her heart—a movement instinct with gratitude and grace.

"Thanks to you, I am again free and joyous—before, I seemed in the grasp of an iron hand. Henceforth, I mean to live quite simply, and shall spend nothing. You will like me just as I am, my friend, will you not? Keep this," she said, taking only six of the bank-notes for herself. "By rights, I owe you a thousand crowns, for I consider that I ought to go halves with you."

Eugène resisted the proffered money like a maiden pure, but when the Baronne said "I shall regard you as my enemy if you refuse to be my accomplice," he yielded the point.

"It will be a stake in reserve, in case of bad luck," he said.

"There! that is what I dreaded to hear," she exclaimed, turning pale. "If you wish that I should ever be anything to you, swear to me," she said, "that you will never enter a gaming-house again. O heavens! To think of *my* corrupting you! If it were so, I should die of grief."

They had now reached the Rue Saint-Lazare. The contrast between the display of opulence in the home and the wretchedness in the heart of its mistress, fairly dazed the student, in whose

ears the cynical vaticinations of Vautrin began to be audible again.

"Sit down there," said the Baronne, pointing to an ottoman before the fire, in her own room. "I have a difficult letter to write. Tell me what to say."

"Don't say anything. Put the notes in an envelope, address it, and send your maid to deliver it."

"What a dear you are!" she said. "Ah, you see what it is, monsieur, to have been well brought up! That is the Beauséant, thoroughbred," she added, smiling.

"She is charming," thought Eugène, who was now further gone in love than ever.

He looked round the room, which breathed the luxurious elegance that enshrines a courtesan in high life. "Do you like this room?" she asked, as she touched the bell to call her maid.

"Thérèse, here is a letter for M. de Marsay. You will take it to him yourself, and deliver it into his own hand. If he is not at home, bring the letter back to me."

Thérèse withdrew, but not without throwing a glance of ill-will at Eugène. Dinner was now announced. Rastignac gave his arm to Madame de Nucingen, who led him into a charming dining-room, where he saw once more that luxury of the table which had impressed him so much at his cousin's.

"On opera nights," she said, "you will come and dine with me, and take me to the theatre."

"I might accustom myself to this pleasant kind of life, if it were going to last; but I am only a poor student who has his fortune to make."

"It will make itself, all right," she said, smil-

ing. "Everything comes right, as you see: I did not think to be so happy as I am now."

It is in the nature of women to prove the impossible by the possible, and to annihilate the facts of the moment by the power of their presentiments. When Madame de Nucingen and Rastignac entered her box at the Bouffons, she wore a look of happiness which made her so beautiful that everybody at once began to hazard those little calumnies against which women are defenceless, and which often establish an evil reputation that has no other basis than a jest lightly made. When a man knows Paris, he ceases to believe anything that people say there, or to say anything about what people do. Eugène took the Baronne's hand in his, and by means of light pressure or closer clasp, those two carried on a kind of dialogue during the whole evening, and conveyed to one another the sensations which the music stirred in them. For both of them it was an evening of thrilling emotion and content. They came away together, and Madame de Nucingen insisted on driving Eugène as far as the Pont Neuf. Along the whole route he disputed with her in vain for a single kiss, after all the many kisses which she had lavished on him so warmly at the Palais-Royal. He reminded her of this, and charged her with inconsistency.

"That," she said, "was gratitude for a devotion that I had not dared to hope for; now it would be a promise."

"And you will give me no promise, Ungrateful One?"

His vexation was apparent; but, with one of those gestures of impatience which ravish a lover's heart, she gave him her hand to kiss; and

he took it with a bad grace which completely delighted her.

"Till Monday, then, at the ball," she said.

As Eugène walked home in the moonlight, he fell into a train of serious thoughts. He was at once happy and dissatisfied. Happy, on account of an adventure of which the probable outcome would be that one of the prettiest and most fashionable-looking women in Paris, of whom he was already enamoured, would become his: and dissatisfied, because he saw his projects of material advancement thrown to the ground. The latter consideration gave new force and definiteness to the vague ideas which had filled his mind during the previous night, and the first intimation of failure made him feel more sharply the stress of his desire. The more he allowed himself to taste the pleasures of Parisian life, the less willing he became to remain moneyless and obscure. He fingered the thousand-franc note in his pocket, and began to feign to himself a thousand plausible reasons for appropriating it. Reaching the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, he ascended the stair and saw a light on the top landing. Père Goriot had lit his candle and left his door open that the student might not forget to come in and "tell him all about his daughter," as he said. Eugène went in, and told him everything.

"What!" cried the old man in a passion of jealousy and grief, "so they think I am ruined, I, who have still thirteen hundred francs a year! *Mon Dieu!* why didn't she come to me, poor little thing? I would have sold out my stock in the funds, and we could have taken some of the capital, and with the remainder I could have bought myself a life-annuity. Why didn't *you*

come, good neighbour, and tell me about her difficulties—how could you have the heart to go and risk her poor little hundred francs at the gaming-table? It is enough to break one's heart. You see what it is to have sons-in-law! Oh, if I had them in my hands now, I should strangle them. *Mon Dieu!* crying—did you say she was crying?"

"Yes, with her head on my waistcoat," said Eugène.

"Oh! give it me," cried Père Goriot. "What! her tears have fallen there, my darling Delphine's tears, who never cried, even when she was a little child! Oh, I will buy you another. You must wear this one no more—let me keep it. She is entitled, by the terms of her marriage-contract, to the use and control of her own money. Ah! as soon as to-morrow morning comes, I shall call on Derville. He is a solicitor; and I shall get him to see that her money is invested in her own name. I know what the law is. I am an old wolf, and I shall show that I can bite yet!"

"Here, father; here is a thousand-franc note which she wanted me to take out of our winnings. Keep it for her, in the pocket of the waistcoat."

Goriot looked at Eugène; then he stretched out and took hold of his hand, and Eugène felt a tear fall upon it.

"Your life will prosper," said the old man. "God is just, never fear. I know an honest man when I see him, and I tell you there are few men in the world like you. You also are going to be one of my dear children from now—that is so, is it not? Go to bed now; sleep well. *You* can sleep, for you are not yet a father. She was weeping, and I have had to be told of it. I sat

there in content, eating at my ease, like some creature without intelligence, while she was in suffering—I, who would sell the Father and Son and Holy Ghost to spare either of them the shedding of one tear!"

"On my word," thought Eugène, as he lay down that night, "I think I shall be an honest man as long as I live. There is a deal of pleasure won by obeying the promptings of one's conscience."

Perhaps only those who believe in a God are capable of doing good in secret; and Eugène did believe.

On the following evening he called at the appointed time on Madame de Beauséant, and was by her taken to the Duchesse de Carigliano's ball and presented to the Maréchale herself, by whom he was very graciously received. Amongst the other guests he noticed Madame de Nucingen. Delphine had evidently, in dressing for this ball, planned to make herself pleasing to Eugène by making herself admired by everybody else. Though she tried hard to appear unconcerned, she was waiting impatiently till he should look at her. Such a moment is full of pleasing sensations, for one who can divine the emotions of a woman. Who is there that has not often, for the sake of this, kept back his opinion, dissembled the fact that he was pleased, gathered avowals of love that were prompted by uneasiness, or enjoyed the spectacle of a throng of little fears which he knew that a smile would scatter? It was at this assembly that the student suddenly realised the true nature of his social position, and the important status which belonged to him as the acknowledged cousin of Madame de Beauséant. His conquest of the Baronne de

Nucingen—for with this success he was already credited—threw him into still further relief, and made him a mark for the envious glances of all the other young men. Some of those glances did not escape him, and in noticing them he tasted for the first time the fatuous self-content of the lucky man. As he passed from room to room, and from group to group, he could hear bystanders making a wonder of his good fortune. The women all prophesied that he would have a great deal of success, and Delphine, in fear of losing him, promised that she would not withhold that night the kiss which she had refused him so obdurately two evenings ago. Eugène received many invitations in the course of the evening, and was introduced by his cousin to a number of women there, who were all considered to belong to the inner circle of fashion, and whose houses were considered to be very pleasant places to have the entrée of. Thus he found himself fairly enfranchised not only in the highest but also in the handsomest world of Paris. The whole evening was indeed a brilliant début for Eugène, and it was one of which he was to carry the recollection into his old age, even as a woman never forgets the ball at which she came out as a young girl, and had her procession of triumphs.

At dinner next day he was recounting to Père Goriot the story of his success, within the hearing of the boarders. Vautrin began to laugh with diabolic mockery.

"And do you suppose," cried this savage logician, "that a young man of fashion can live in the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, in the Maison Vauquer—an exceedingly respectable boarding-house, I grant you, in every way, but an establishment, nevertheless, which is anything

rather than fashionable? It is cosy, it is lordly in the abundance of its fare, it is proud to be the temporary abode of a Rastignac. But, for all that, it is in the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, and knows nothing of luxury, because, you see, it is purely *patriarchalorama*. My young friend," continued Vautrin, with an air of paternal raillery, "if you want to make a figure in Paris, you will need to have three horses, a tilbury for the morning and a brougham for the evening: in all, nine thousand francs to pay for carrying you about. Then you will be unworthy of your destiny if you don't spend more than three thousand francs on your tailor, six hundred francs on your vendor of perfumes, a hundred crowns on your bootmaker, another hundred crowns on your hatter. As for your laundress, she will stand you in another thousand francs. A young man of fashion cannot make too strong a point of attention to his linen—for is it not the article of his outfit which is most often submitted to scrutiny? Love and the Church demand a fair altar-cloth. So, we have arrived at fourteen thousand. I am saying nothing, you observe, of what you will lose at play and in bets, or what you will expend on presents. Then there is mere pocket-money, which cannot possibly be set down at less than two thousand francs. I have lived that life, and I know what the disbursements are. . . . Add now, to these first necessaries of fashion, three hundred louis for your victuals, and a thousand francs for a nest at night. So, my dear boy, for all those little necessaries we must have twenty-five thousand francs a year in our trouser pockets—or we will fall in the dirt, we shall become a laughing-stock, and shall lose all our splendid future and

our wonderful successes and our mistresses!—I have forgotten the valet and the groom. Are you going to send Christophe about with your billets-doux? or are you going to write them on the note-paper you now use? It would be suicide. Take the advice of an old man full of experience!" he continued, making his bass voice ring louder at every word; "either betake yourself to a garret and live virtuously, wedded to your work, or else go about it some other way."

Vautrin gave a quick twitch of the eye and leered in the direction of Mademoiselle Taillefer in a way which recalled and recapitulated all the seductive arguments with regard to her, which he had already sown, like seeds of corruption, in the heart of the student.

A number of days passed during which Rastignac lived in great dissipation. He dined almost daily with Madame de Nucingen and went with her into society. He would come home at three or four in the morning, would rise at noon to dress, and then go to the Bois with Delphine if the weather was fine, prodigally wasting time, of which he did not know the value, and drinking in all the instructions and all the enchantments of this luxurious manner of life as eagerly as the blossom of the date-palm receives the fertilising dust of its hymeneal festival. He staked heavily at play, won and lost large sums, and ended by feeling habituated to the extravagant life which young men lead in Paris. He sent to his mother and sisters fifteen hundred francs out of his first winnings, and with this repayment sent pretty presents for each of them. He had made known his intention of leaving the Maison Vauquer, but he was still

there when January came, nor did he see his way to make other arrangements. Young men are all dominated by a certain law which appears mysterious, but the explanation of which lies in the fact that they are young, and in the kind of frenzy with which they throw themselves upon the quest of pleasure; the law, namely, that be they rich or be they poor, they never have money for the necessities of life, yet can always find it for their caprices. Prodigals in everything which may be had on credit, they are niggardly in everything for which present payments must be made, and seem to avenge themselves for what they have to do without by being extravagant in the things within their reach. Thus, to put the matter in a phrase, a student takes more care of his hat than his coat. By virtue of the high profits of his trade, the tailor is necessarily a creditor, whereas the small sum which the hatter nets at each transaction, makes him one of the most intractable powers with which the young man ever has occasion to negotiate. In the same way the young man in the balcony of a theatre, who displays a gorgeous waistcoat to the eyes and opera-glasses of pretty women, may very possibly be lacking in the article of socks; for the hosier is another of the tribe of weevils that nibble at his purse. This was the case with Rastignac. Always empty for Madame Vauquer, always full for the claims of vanity, his purse had a wild succession of gains and losses utterly incompatible with payments of a matter-of-fact kind. The boarding house might stink, it might be a mean hole where his pride was subjected to many a humiliation—but, in order to leave it, would not he have to pay a month's board to his landlady, and likewise purchase furniture for his fashion-

able chambers? This was what he could never see his way to do. Rastignac could buy from his jeweller watches and gold chains—to be paid for at very high rates out of his winnings at play—and could then take them to the Pawnbroker, that sombre and discreet friend of youth; but he had neither invention nor audacity when confronted with the problem of paying for his food or his lodging, or of buying the articles that were necessary for the full carrying out of his dream of a fashionable life. There was no longer any inspiration for him in an everyday necessity or in the existence of debts contracted for the satisfaction of his needs. Like most of those who have tried to live upon their luck, he put off, as long as he could, the meeting of obligations which are regarded as sacred by commonplace people, just as Mirabeau did not pay his baker's account until it presented itself in the redoubtable form of a bill of exchange.

About this time Rastignac had lost all his money, and got into debt. He began to see clearly that it would be impossible for him to continue this kind of life unless he had some assured source of income. But even while feeling most keenly the sharp pricks of his precarious position, and groaning for pain thereof, he avowed to himself his inability to renounce the extravagant enjoyments of this life and desired to continue them at all costs. The chances on which he had counted for making his fortune had proved visionary, and the real obstacles increased their dimensions. His initiation into the secrets of the Nucingen household had shown him that if he wished to make his love-affair a lever in his fortunes, he would have to swallow all sense of shame and renounce those generous

ideals which give absolution to the faults of youth. So he was wedded to this life of outward splendour, with its inward gnawings of the worm of remorse, and its fugitive pleasures dearly bought at the price of abiding anguish—he had abandoned himself to it, and, like *Le Distrait* of La Bruyère, had made his bed in the mire of a ditch; but was like *Le Distrait* also in this, that only his raiment was sullied as yet.

"So we have killed our mandarin, have we?" said Bianchon to him one day, as he rose from the table.

"Not yet," he answered. "But I can hear the death-rattle in his throat."

The medical student took the words as a jest; but they were no jest. Eugène had dined at the boarding-house that day for the first time for a long while past, and had been thoughtful and silent during the meal. Instead of withdrawing at dessert he remained in the dining-room, seated near Mademoiselle Taillefer, towards whom he looked from time to time in an interested way. Some of the boarders remained at the table eating nuts, whilst others walked up and down the room continuing the talk which they had started at dinner. The custom of the boarding-house allowed everyone to leave the table when he liked, and a boarder would go soon or linger long in proportion to the interest which he took in the conversation, or whether the meal he had finished weighed heavy within him. In winter the dining-room was seldom quite empty before eight o'clock; at which hour the four women would be left alone, and would have their revenge for the silence previously imposed upon the sex by an assembly predominantly masculine.

Vautrin had been struck by the abstractedness which preyed upon Eugène during dinner. He now remained in the dining-room—although he had appeared to be in haste to finish his dinner and go—and so placed himself as to be always out of eyeshot of Eugène, who, he was aware, thought that he had gone. Later on, instead of accompanying the other male boarders who were the last to leave, he slyly took up a position in the salon. He had been reading the student's soul, and felt that a decisive symptom was about to declare itself. And Rastignac was indeed in a perplexed passage of his life, such as many another young man has certainly passed through.

Whether in love, or only trifling with him, Madame de Nucingen had brought to bear upon Eugène all the resources of that feminine management and diplomacy so highly developed in Parisian society, and thus had caused him to pass through every kind of painful discipline which a sincere passion can suffer from. After committing herself before the world's eyes by keeping Madame de Beauséant's cousin so close to her side, she yet hesitated to grant him the privileges which he had the appearance of having secured. For a whole month she so wrought upon his senses that in the end she reached his heart. In the first few hours of their friendship, indeed, the student had been able to persuade himself that he was master; but Madame de Nucingen had become the stronger ere long, and this she effected by her skilful manipulation of his own qualities, by setting in conflict within Eugène all the emotions, good and bad, of the two or three different men that there are in every young man turned loose in Paris. Was it done in cold blood, in obedience to some design of

hers? No. Women are always sincere, even in their grossest falsities, because they are always actuated by some sentiment that is quite simple and human.

We may suppose that Delphine, after having permitted this young man to usurp so abruptly a lover's ascendancy over her, and after having herself betrayed too much affection for him, was influenced later by an awakened sense of dignity, which commanded her to recall her concessions or to suspend them during her own pleasure. It seems so natural for a Parisienne, even when she is yielding to the pull of her passion, and is on the verge of surrender, to hesitate in the act of her fall, and question yet again the heart to which she is committing her future. Once already Madame de Nucingen had had all her hopes betrayed, and her devotion to a selfish young lover had been rewarded with ingratitude. If she was distrustful, she could show good cause. And it is true that Eugène's rapid success had made him something of a cockscomb already ; and she may have detected something in his manner that expressed a kind of insolence, a kind of disrespect, begotten by the peculiar nature of their relation to one another. She wished, no doubt, to appear a woman of some personal importance in the eyes of a lover of his age, wished to feel that she stood erect in his presence after having so long made little of herself to him who had abandoned her. She was the more unwilling that Eugène should be able to look on her as an easy conquest, precisely because he knew that she had belonged to de Marsay. Finally, having tasted degradation in her submission to the will of a depraved and heartless young libertine, it was doubtless so soothing to find herself wan-

dering in the more innocent and flowery fields of love that she could not bring herself to break the charm, or get tired of watching all its ways, but wished to listen yet and yet longer to its tremulous utterances, and still to feel herself caressed by the pure breezes of a maiden passion. The true lover was paying for the sins of the false one: a moral paradox which will continue to reappear only too often, so long as men do not consider how many fair flowers are mown down in a young woman's soul by the first stroke of treachery.

Whatever her motives were, Delphine played with Rastignac, and was very happy in the part; doubtless because she felt quite sure of his love, and knew, also, that she would be able to put an end to her lover's unhappiness whenever it should be her royal pleasure so to do. Eugène, on his side, was unwilling that his first battle should end in a defeat, and persisted in the pursuit just as a young sportsman determines that he will not go home without having brought down a partridge to his own gun on his first St. Hubert's Day. His anxieties about his position, his injured self-love, his despairs, real or feigned, all bound him more and more closely to this woman. Everybody in Paris credited him with having made a conquest of Madame de Nucingen, yet he had got no further with her than on the first day he saw her. Too inexperienced to know that a woman's coquetry may afford a delight that is worth more than the pleasures of her surrendered love, he occasionally fell into a condition of stupid bad temper. If those days, during which Rastignac strove in vain with a woman for her love, were really rich with the springtime spoils of his life, the fruits of that season were like to

prove as costly to him as they were green and sharp and pleasant to the taste. There were times when he saw himself without a sou and without a future; and at such times the voice of conscience could not keep him from thinking of the chances of a rich fortune which Vautrin had shown to be obtainable through a marriage with Mademoiselle Taillefer.

At the present moment, then, his poverty cried to him with so loud a voice that he yielded almost mechanically to the designs of this terrible sphinx, whose glance had so often cast a kind of spell upon him. Poiret and Mademoiselle Michonneau had just gone to their rooms, and there was no one present, Eugène thought, except Madame Vauquer and Madame de Couture, who was knitting woollen sleeves as she dozed beside the stove. He looked at Mademoiselle de Taillefer with such feeling that she lowered her eyes.

"Are you in trouble, Monsieur Eugène?" said Victorine, after a pause.

"Who is there that is without his troubles?" answered Eugène. "Yet if we could be sure, we young men, of being loved by somebody, with a devotion which would be our reward for the sacrifices which we are always ready to make, perhaps we should have no troubles."

Mademoiselle Taillefer's only answer was a glance, the meaning of which could not be doubted.

"You, for instance, mademoiselle—you think that you are sure of your own heart to-day; but can you answer for it that it will never change?"

A smile, like a ray of light breaking from her soul, moved upon the lips of the poor girl, and her face was so lighted up that Eugène was dis-

mayed at having called forth such a sudden stress and issue of feeling.

"Ah, but!" he said; "but supposing to-morrow you found yourself rich and happy—supposing a great fortune had fallen to you from the clouds—would you still love a young man who was poor, but whom you liked in your days of hardship?"

She nodded her head prettily.

"Although he was *very* poor?"

Another nod.

"What nonsense is that you are talking?" cried Madame Vauquer.

"Leave us alone," answered Eugène; "we understand each other."

"So, there is to be an engagement of marriage between M. le Chevalier Eugène de Rastignac and Mademoiselle Victorine Taillefer?" cried the loud voice of Vautrin, Vautrin himself suddenly appearing in the doorway of the dining-room.

"Oh, what a fright you gave me!" exclaimed Madame Couture and Madame Vauquer, in one breath.

"I might make a worse choice," said Eugène, with a laugh. The voice of Vautrin had waked in him the most painful rush of feeling he had ever known.

"No unbecoming jests, messieurs!" said Madame Couture. "Come, dear; let us go upstairs."

Madame Vauquer followed her boarders, meaning to pass the evening with them, and thereby effect an economy of fire and candles. Eugène found himself with Vautrin, face to face, and alone.

"I knew quite well that you would come

round," said Vautrin, with imperturbable coolness. "But come! I have my feelings of delicacy, like other people. Don't bother to decide just now, you are not your own man. You have debts that trouble you. Well, I should not like it to be your passion or your despair that determines you to come to me, but the pure force of reason. You might, perhaps, have need of a thousand crowns. Here they are, will you have them?"

The Tempter took out a pocket-book, and drew from it three bank-notes, which he fluttered before the student's eyes. Eugène was then in one of the most painful situations possible. He owed a hundred louis to the Marquis d'Ajuda and to the Comte de Trailles for losses at play; and not having the money, he dared not go to Madame de Restaud's, where he was expected to spend the evening. It was one of those informal gatherings where you eat little cakes and drink tea, but where, also, you can lose six thousand francs at whist in the course of the night.

"Monsieur," said Eugène, trying to conceal the convulsive trembling which he felt within him, "after what you have told me, you ought to understand that I cannot place myself under any obligation to you."

"Quite right," answered the Tempter. "It would have given me pain to hear you speak differently. You are a fine young fellow, of delicate feelings; proud as a lion and gentle as a young girl—you will be a fine haul when the devil gets you. I like young men of that sort. When you have turned over a thought or two on the high-politics of life, you will see the world as it is. A man of superior parts like you has only to enact one or two little scenes in the name of

virtue, and thereafter he may do whatever he likes amid the rapturous applause of the idiots in the pit. A few days more, and you will be with us. Ah! if you would let me be your tutor, there is nothing I would not show you how to reach. You would not form a desire but it should be instantly accomplished, let the object of your desire be what it might: honours, or wealth, or women. Civilisation should be reduced to the form of a preparation of ambrosia for your benefit. We would make you our spoilt child, our Benjamin; we should die to a man for your sake, and that gladly. Whatever was an obstacle in your way should be flattened out of existence. If you have still some scruples, is it because you think that I am a scoundrel? Well, one man whose probity was quite equal to what you fancy your own to be—M. de Turenne, I mean—had some little dealings of his own with brigands, and did not think himself a worse man on that account. You would rather not be under an obligation to me, eh? Well, don't let that stand in the way," continued Vautrin with a smile. "Take these flimsies, and write across this," he said, pulling out a piece of stamped paper: "*Received the sum of three thousand five hundred francs payable in a year from now*, and fill in the date. The interest is stiff enough to relieve you of your scruples; it will allow you to call me a Jew, and to consider that gratitude for the favour is out of the question. I give you leave to think of me as meanly as you like to-day, for I know that you will love me by-and-by. You will find in me those immense abysses of emotion, those vast forces of concentrated sentiment, which are called vices in the language of fools; but you will never find that I am either a coward, or forgetful of a

kindness. In a word, my boy, I am neither bishop nor pawn, but a castle, a tower of strength, on the chess-board of life."

"What manner of man are you?" cried Eugène. "You seem sent into the world to torture me."

"By no means. I am a good-natured fellow, who is willing to make himself dirty in order that you may be placed out of reach of the mud for the rest of your days. You want to know the reason for this devotion? Well, I shall tell you some day; quietly, in your own ear. You were taken aback, no doubt, by that first lesson I read you, when I showed you how the ropes are worked that ring the chimes of social order, and the play of the whole mechanism. But that first terror will pass off, as the conscript soon loses his trepidations on the field of battle; and you will get accustomed to the philosophy which regards mankind as so many private soldiers doomed to perish in the service of those who crown themselves the Kings of this world. In faith, times are greatly altered. In former days you said to some stout fellow: 'Here's a hundred crowns—kill me M. So-and-So;' and you would eat your supper with an easy mind, after having turned a man into the dark for a mere yes or no. To-day, I propose to bestow upon you a splendid fortune in exchange for a mere nod of the head which compromises you in no single respect, and you hesitate. It is an effeminate age."

Eugène signed the bill, and received the bank notes.

"Come, now, let us have a little sensible talk," continued Vautrin. "I want to leave for America in a few months, to begin growing my tobacco. I shall send you the cigars of friend-

ship. If I become rich, I shall help you in your career. If I have no children of my own (which is likely to be the case, for I am not interested in planting this country with slips of myself), I shall bequeath to you my fortune. Is that being a man's friend, or is it not? But I like you, that's the kind of man I am. I have a passion for devoting myself to somebody else. I have done it before. You see, I live, my boy, in a higher sphere than other men, and look upon all actions as mere means, and recognise only the end as being of any importance. What is a man to me? No more than *that*," he said, clicking his thumb nail against his teeth. "A man is either everything or nothing. He is less than nothing when his name is Poiret: you may crush him like a bug; he is flat and he is offensive. But a man is a god when he is like you: not a piece of mechanism covered with a skin, but a vast theatre, where the most elevated thoughts and feelings, the most beautiful sentiments, are seen in full action. Feelings, sentiments—why, I see nothing in the world but what these show me. What is a sentiment, but the world in a single thought? Look at Père Goriot: his daughters are the whole universe for him; they are the thread which guides him amidst the maze of creation. So, too, with me; I have dug pretty deeply into the subsoil of life, and I find only one sentiment which is real, to which I would give myself: the friendship of a man for a man. Pierre and Jaffier, that is the passion for me. I know *Venice Preserved** by heart. How many

* Otway's great masterpiece, *Venice Preserved, or A Plot Discovered* (1682), had an immense vogue in France. The story is of the friendship of Pierre (not unlike Vautrin in some ways) and the younger man Jaffier. Pierre induced Jaffier to become

people have you known who'd have the pluck, when a friend said: 'Come and help me bury a dead body'—who'd have the pluck to go and do it without a word of remark, and without worrying him about the morals of the thing? Well, I have done that. It isn't everybody that I would talk to in this way; but you are different. You are one above the ruck; I can say anything to you, and you take my meaning like a man. You won't go on, for very long, paddling among the tadpoles in these swamps, the creatures round us here. Well, then, so much is settled: you will marry. Let us now drive each his own point home! Mine is of iron, and will never soften or turn its edge, ha! ha!"

Vautrin left the room, so that he should not have to hear Eugène's rejection of his scheme. Better to leave him alone, he thought. He seemed to know all about those little starts of resistance, those battles which men wage within themselves to little other purpose than that they may hold themselves less culpable later, when they have definitely chosen the evil course.

"He may do what he likes, but I'm not going to marry Mademoiselle Taillefer," thought Eugène.

The thought of entering into a bargain with

member of a junto, which plotted the murder of the Senators. In the end Jaffier was induced by his wife (the daughter of a senator—who had cast her off on account of her clandestine marriage with that youth) to betray the plot. This he did to save his father-in-law's life, but only on receiving a promise that the conspirators should be pardoned. That promise was violated: the pardon only applied to himself, and the others were ordered to be broken on the wheel. Jaffier, being left at large, and finding no other way of rescuing his friend from death by torture, went up to Pierre as he was being led to execution, and stabbed him to the heart. Then he turned the knife upon himself, so that they died together.—Tr.

this man threw his mind into a state of fever which did not subside for some time. He had a feeling of repulsion for Vautrin, although the very cynicism of the man's ideas, and the audacity of his grasp of social life, invested him with a kind of grandeur in the student's eyes. By-and-by, however, Eugène dressed himself, sent for a cab, and drove to Madame de Restaud's. For some days past this lady had paid more and more attention to a young man whose every step was a triumphal progress in the great world, and who bade fair to become a formidable influence some day. He paid Messieurs de Trailles and d'Ajuda, played at whist during half the night, and won back all that he had lost. Being as superstitious as most men are whose future is all uncertain, and who are therefore more or less fatalists, he was willing to see in his luck that night a sign of heaven's approval of his perseverance in the good path. Next morning, he hastened to ask Vautrin if he had still that bill of exchange, and on receiving a reply in the affirmative, he paid him back the three thousand francs, making no secret of his pleasure in doing so—and the feeling was natural enough.

"Everything goes well," said Vautrin.

"But I am not your accomplice," said Eugène.

"I know, I know!" said Vautrin, interrupting. "You are still a little childish. You allow yourself to be stopped by the trifles in the doorway."

A couple of days after this, Poiret and Mademoiselle Michonneau were sunning themselves on a bench in an unfrequented walk of the Jardin des Plantes, in conversation with the gentleman in regard to whom the medical student had had, and not without reason, his suspicions.

"Mademoiselle," said M. Gondureau, "I do not see why you need have any scruples. His Excellency Monseigneur the Royal Minister of Police . . ."

"Oh! His Excellency Monseigneur the Minister of Police. . . !" repeated Poiret.

"Yes, his Excellency is taking a personal interest in this affair," said Gondureau.

Who will fail to be struck by the unlikelihood that Poiret, a retired functionary, and a man not destitute, doubtless, of the proper virtues of the citizen class, albeit without a thought in his head, should yet continue to give a hearing to the pretended man of independent means from the Rue de Buffon, after the latter had uttered the word *Police*, and so had permitted the physiognomy of a detective from the Rue de Jerusalem to show itself through the mask of a decent citizen? Yet, nothing was more natural; and in proof of this we shall quote here some remarks made by certain observers of the world of Paris, remarks hitherto unpublished, but which will help every reader to realise more clearly that particular species to which Poiret belonged in the great family of fools. There is a race of Quill-Drivers, confined in the budget between the first degree of latitude, where the salaries are no more luxuriant than twelve hundred francs a year (a kind of administrative Greenland), and the third degree, where they begin to reach the more generous growth of three or six thousand francs: a temperate region, this latter, where the "Gratification"* begins to be ac-

* This is a vital item in the salary system of French officialdom, affecting nearly everybody, from the humblest member of the police upward to the middle heights of the Civil Service and beyond, not omitting Government offices. The *Gratification* or

climatised, and flourishes, despite some difficulties of culture. Amongst the little peculiarities betraying the weakness and thinness of soul of this subaltern horde of officials, may be reckoned the involuntary, mechanical, and instinctive reverence with which the tribe regards that Grand Lama of every State Department, known to the ordinary members of the staff only by his signature (an illegible scrawl) and the term "HIS EXCELLENCY MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE"—five words that have the same value as the formula *il bondo Cani* in the *Calife de Bagdad*, and which, in the eyes of those poor creatures, represent a sacred power from which there is no appeal. As religious infallibility belongs to the Pope in the eyes of Christians, so administrative infallibility invests His Excellency in the eyes of the humbler order of officials. The radiance that issues from himself is communicated, in some degree, to all that he does, all that he says, and to all that is said in his name. His robe of office covers all responsibility, and legalises everything that is done by his order: his very name—"His Excellency"—attesting, as it does, the purity of his intentions and the righteousness of his will, is

gratuity, partakes equally of the nature of a tip, of a recognised bonus, and of deferred pay. It is an extra sum of money, over and above the stated salary, paid at the New Year (or on the King's Birthday, if the Republic is in abeyance for the time being), and is conceived as a provision—somewhat contingent on good behaviour—making up for any meagreness in the salary proper. As a fact, those who have a meagre salary naturally get a meagre *gratification*, and those who have a fat salary get a fat one. There is quite an elaborate and legally-fixed scale regulating these gratuities. The word also covers rewards for services. Thus the man who catches a thief or gives information leading to capture, is "gratified," and the customs officer who intercepts your innocent contraband will receive his *gratification* in exchange for that of which he has robbed you.—Tr.

itself a kind of passport, and clears the way for the reception of projects which, without that sanction in their favour, would be scouted at once. Things which those poor souls could not be brought to do in their own interest, they will vie with each other in carrying out if only the words "His Excellency" appear in the command. Government departments have their cult of passive obedience, just as the army has; and the tendency of the whole system is towards stifling the conscience and annihilating the individual soul of the man, and converting him, in the fulness of time, into a vice or screw in the governmental machine.

M. Gondureau, then, who was apparently a judge of human nature, at once marked down Poiret as being one of those bureaucratic simpletons, and therefore produced his *deus ex machina*, the talismanic phrase "His Excellency," in such a way as to unmask his batteries and dazzle Poiret at the same moment—Poiret, whom he concluded to be the male of Michonneau as a Michonneau was the female of Poiret.

"When you tell me that His Excellency himself, His Excellency Monseigneur le . . . Ah! it is quite different," said Poiret.

"You hear what this gentleman says, on whose judgment you seem to place reliance," continued the pretended *rentier*, addressing himself to Mademoiselle Michonneau. "Well, then; His Excellency is at this moment absolutely certain that the so-called Vautrin, now lodging at the Maison Vauquer, is an escaped convict from the Toulon Prison, where he is known under the name of Trompe-la-Mort."

"Ah! Trompe-la-Mort!" said Poiret; "he is very fortunate if he deserves that name."

"Yes, indeed," answered the detective. "He owes this nickname to his good fortune in never losing his life in any of the enterprises—and uncommonly bold ones they have been—which he has taken in hand. I assure you he is a dangerous man! He has qualities which mark him out from other men. Even the fact of his condemnation has gained him no end of honour in the eyes of his own people."

"So he is a man of honour?" asked Poiret.

"After his own fashion, yes. He allowed himself to be found guilty of another man's crime, a forgery committed by a very handsome young fellow whom he was fond of, a young Italian too much given to play—who has since entered the army and there conducted himself in a thoroughly creditable manner."

"But," said Mademoiselle Michonneau, "if His Excellency the Minister of Police is sure that M. Vautrin is Trompe-la-Mort, what should he want with me?"

"Ah, yes!" said Poiret. "If in fact the Minister, as you have done us the honour to remark, has an absolute certainty . . ."

"Certainty is not the word; he only suspects. Let me explain the position to you. Jacques Collin *alias* Trompe-la-Mort is in the confidence of every convict in the three Prisons, and they have appointed him their man of business and their banker. He makes a very good thing out of the management of their affairs, for which, of course, a man of mark was required."

"Ha! ha! do you see the pun, Mademoiselle?" said Poiret. "Monsieur calls him a man of *mark* because he has been marked (branded)."

"The so-called Vautrin," continued the agent, "receives the money of Messieurs the convicts, invests it, keeps it for them and holds it at the service of those who escape, or of their families when they have made a will to that effect, or of their mistresses, when they draw upon him for their benefit."

"Their mistresses! you mean to say their wives?" Poiret ventured to remark.

"No, sir. The spouses of the convict are usually illegitimate—what we term concubines."

"Then they all live in a state of concubinage."

"Naturally."

"Why then," said Poiret, "these are abominations which His Excellency ought not to tolerate! Since you have the honour of personal access to His Excellency, it is for you, who appear to entertain philanthropic ideas, to make him acquainted with the immoral conduct of those people, who set a very bad example to the rest of society."

"But, sir, the government does not hold them up as models of all the virtues."

"That is true. Nevertheless, sir, permit . . ."

"Just wait a little, dearest—let the gentleman speak," said Mademoiselle Michonneau.

"You understand how it is, Mademoiselle," continued Gondureau. "The government may have the strongest reasons for wishing to lay hands on this illegal Fund, which is said to amount to a very large sum. Trompe-la-Mort collects a great deal of money. For he is not only banker for his own comrades, but large amounts are sent to him by the Society of the Ten Thousand . . ."

"Ten thousand thieves!" cried Poiret in dismay.

"No, the Society of the Ten Thousand is an association of high-caste thieves, men who work

on a large scale and do not mix in any concern that does not promise them at least ten thousand francs. This society comprises all the most distinguished men amongst those who are sent straight to the Court of Assizes for trial. They know the Code and take care never to run the risk of making themselves liable to the death penalty when they are copped. Collin is their man of business and their legal adviser. Having immense revenues always at his disposal, he has been able to create a Police of his own, a widely-spread organisation which he has managed to surround with impenetrable mystery. Although we have had him surrounded with spies for the last twelvemonth, we have never been able to catch him at his game. His capital and his own talents enable him to keep the vicious constantly in his pay; they constitute a fund for the propagation of crime and keep on foot an army of blackguards who live in a state of perpetual war against society. If we could lay hold of Trompe-la-Mort and secure his bank, we should be cutting at the root of the evil. So, you see, this undertaking has really become an affair of State and a transaction of high-political importance, and is one capable of bestowing honour upon those who help to bring it to a prosperous issue. You yourself, monsieur, might well be taken into government employment again. You might be made secretary to a Commissary of Police, a position which you could hold without prejudice to your present retiring allowance."

"But," said Mademoiselle Michonneau, "why does not Trompe-la-Mort go off with the money?"

"Oh," replied the detective, "wherever he might go, he would be followed by a man whose duty it is to kill him if he robs the convicts.

Then it is not so easy to carry off a strong box full of money as it is to elope with a young lady of good family. Besides, Collin is a fellow incapable of doing a thing like that; he would consider himself a dishonoured man."

"Sir," said Poiret, "you are right; he would be utterly dishonoured."

"All that, however, does not explain why you don't come and simply take him without more ado," observed Mademoiselle Michonneau.

"Well Mademoiselle, I will explain that . . . But," he whispered in her ear, "you must keep your friend from interrupting me or we shall never be finished. He would want to have a very large fortune, this old chap, to make folk like to listen to him. . . On coming here, Trompe-la-Mort put on the skin, so to say, of an honest man, and transformed himself into a decent citizen of Paris. He took care to choose an unpretending boarding-house as his place of abode. Ah, he is cunning! You will never find him without sap. Then M. Vautrin is a man much looked up to, one who does a very large amount of business."

"Naturally," said Poiret to himself.

"The Minister would not like to bring down on himself all the commercial world of Paris, and public opinion as well; which he might do if he made a mistake and arrested a real Vautrin. M. le Prefet de Police is not sure of his ground, and he has enemies. If there was a mistake somewhere, those who want his place would make use of the yelpings and the outcry of the Opposition to force him to resign. We must proceed here as in the affair of Cogniard, the spurious Comte de Sainte-Hélène. If there had been a real Comte de Sainte-Hélène we should have

been exceeding our powers. So, we must identify our man."

"Yes, but you want a pretty woman for that," said Mademoiselle Michonneau quickly.

"Trompe-la-Mort would not let a woman come near him," said the detective. "Let me tell you a secret: he does not like women."

"Well, I don't see, in that case, how I can be of any service in making this identification, supposing that I were willing to do it for two thousand francs."

"Nothing easier," answered the Unknown. "I shall send you a phial containing one dose of a liquid, a drug which will not do him the slightest real harm, but it will cause a rush of blood to the head and produce symptoms like those of apoplexy. This drug you can mix with wine or coffee with equal certainty of its not being noticed. You will have your man carried off to bed at once, and will have his clothes undone, to see that his heart still beats. As soon as you find yourself alone with him, you will give him a smart slap on the shoulder and heigh-presto! the Letters* will come into view."

"Why, it is nothing," said Poiret.

"Well, do you agree?" said Gondureau to the old maid.

"But, my dear sir, supposing there were no Letters? Would I have the two thousand francs all the same?" said Mademoiselle Michonneau.

"No."

"What shall I get, then?"

"Five hundred francs."

"What, do a thing like *that*, for such a trifle! The injury to one's conscience is just the

* T. F. = *Travaux Forcés* = Penal Servitude.

same, and I have my conscience to soothe, Monsieur."

"I assure you," interposed Poiret, "that Mademoiselle has a great deal of conscience, besides being an extremely amiable person and very intelligent."

"I tell you what," said Mademoiselle Michonneau. "Give me three thousand francs if he is Trompe-la-Mort, and nothing at all if he is an ordinary citizen."

"Done!" said Gondureau, "but on condition that the thing be carried through to-morrow."

"Not so soon as that, my dear sir. I must seek advice of my confessor."

"Ah, *you're* a sly one, I see!" said the detective, rising to go. "Till to-morrow, then. If you wish to see me in a hurry about anything, come to the Petite-Rue-Sainte-Anne, at the foot of the Cour de la Sainte-Chapelle. There is only one door under the archway, and you will ask there for M. Gondureau."

At that moment Bianchon was passing by, on his way from Cuvier's class, and his ear was caught by the rather peculiar name "Trompe-la-Mort," and by the emphatic "Done!" of the celebrated chief of detectives.

"Why didn't you close with him?" said Poiret to Mademoiselle Michonneau. "It would have been an annuity of three hundred francs."

"Why?" she answered. "Because it wants thinking about. If M. Vautrin happened to be this Trompe-la-Mort, it might be more profitable to make a little arrangement with him. Still, on the other hand, if one asked him for money, one would be putting him on his guard, and he is just the kind of man to decamp without paying. That would be an abominable sell."

"And if you did put him on his guard," continued Poiret, "hasn't the gentleman told you that he is closely watched? He would be none the better off, and you would lose all round."

"In any case," thought Mademoiselle Michonneau, "I don't like the man at all. He says nothing but disagreeable things to me."

"But you can do better than that," continued Poiret. "As the gentleman pointed out—and he seemed to me a very good sort of man, besides being very well-dressed—it is an act of obedience to the laws, to help society to be rid of a criminal, however virtuous he may be. He who has drunk once will drink again. Supposing the fancy took him to murder us all? The deuce! we should be guilty of these murders, besides being the first victims ourselves!"

Mademoiselle Michonneau was too much taken up with her own thoughts to give any heed to Poiret's talk, which continued drip-drop, drip-dropping from his tongue like water from an ill-closed tap. When this old fellow once got started on one of his rigmaroles, he was like a piece of mechanism wound up to go, and would go on for ever, unless Mademoiselle Michonneau stopped him. He would enter upon one subject, and then being led astray by his own parentheses, would proceed to canvass all sorts of other subjects as remote as possible therefrom, and at no point in his ramblings would he arrive at a conclusion in regard to anything. By the time they had reached the Maison Vauquer, on this occasion, he had worked his way through a whole string of passages and citations which had nothing to do with the case, and had thereby been led on to a rehearsal of his own depositions in the lawsuit of the Sieur Ragoulleau *v.* Dame Morin,

in which he had appeared as a witness for the defence. As they entered, his companion did not fail to notice Eugène de Rastignac in very intimate conversation with Mademoiselle Taillefer; the talk was indeed of such thrilling interest, that the young couple did not even remark the passage of the two old boarders through the dining-room.

"I knew it would come to that," said Mademoiselle Michonneau to Poiret. "They've been looking at each other in the most heart-rending way for a week past."

"Yes," he answered; "so she was condemned."

"Who?"

"Madame Morin."

"I speak to you of Mademoiselle Victorine," said la Michonneau, as she walked absently into Poiret's room, "and you answer me by remarks about Madame Morin. Who may *she* be?"

"But what can Mademoiselle Victorine be guilty of?" demanded Poiret.

"Guilty of loving M. Eugène de Rastignac, and going straight on without the least idea of what it will bring her to, poor innocent that she is!"

Eugène had been reduced to despair by Madame Nucingen that morning. In his own mind he had already surrendered himself completely to Vautrin, though he dared not question himself about the motives of this extraordinary man's friendship nor yet about the future that awaited such a marriage. Nothing but a miracle could snatch him now from the sheer gulf into which he had begun his descent an hour ago in exchanging tender promises with Mademoiselle Victorine. To Victorine, it was like listening to the voice of an angel; the

heavens were opened for her, the Maison Vauquer was adorned with the strange and glorious hues which scenic artists shed upon the palaces of the stage. She loved, she was loved, or at least she believed she was loved! And what woman, listening to Rastignac during that hour snatched from the Argus-eyed observation of the Maison Vauquer, could have looked in his face and not believed that she was loved? For he was fighting hard with his own conscience—was telling himself that he did evil, and that he did it knowingly —was telling himself again that it was a venial fault and that he should atone for it by making the happiness of a woman's life—and the despairing tension of his mind lent a beauty to his features, and some splendour of the diabolic fires that were consuming his heart. Fortunately for him, the miracle happened. Vautrin walked into the room with a joyous air, and at a single glance read the souls of those two young people whom he had married by the machinations of his infernal genius. Their joys were broken in upon by the mockery of his harsh voice:

"*A charming girl is my Fanchette*
In her simplicity. . . ."

Victorine fled from the room, as happy now as all the rest of her life had been wretched. Poor girl! a pressure of the hand, the light touch of Rastignac's hair upon her cheek, a word whispered so close to her ear that she almost felt the warmth of the student's lips, the clasp of a trembling arm around her form, and a kiss upon her neck—these were the betrothal rites of her passion —rites which the proximity of fat Sylvie—who might break in at any moment upon this radiant dining-room—rendered more passionate, more

eloquent, more entrancing than the feats achieved in proof of devotion that are chronicled by the most famous tales of chivalry. Those "lesser suffrages" of love, to use the pretty phrase of our ancestors, were felt to be criminal by this pious young creature who went to confession twice a month. In this one hour she had poured forth the treasures of her soul more prodigally than was possible to her in later days of wealth and happiness, when she gave herself altogether.

"The affair is arranged," said Vautrin to Eugène; "our two dandies have fallen out. Everything was done in quite good form—a little difference of opinion—our dove presently insults my hawk—so it is an appointment for to-morrow in the Clignancourt redoubt. At half-past eight, while Mademoiselle Taillefer is dipping her buttered bread in her coffee, the affection and the fortune of her father will fall to her by inheritance. It sounds queer, does it not? That little chap Taillefer is a redoubtable swordsman, so he is as confident as a gamecock. But he will be bled all the same, thanks to a thrust which I have invented—a particular way of throwing up your point and driving it through your man's forehead. I must teach you that little thrust; it is a thundering useful thing to know."

Rastignac listened with a stupefied look, and could make no reply. At this moment Père Goriot, Bianchon, and several other boarders came into the room.

"That is how I wanted to see you," said Vautrin. "You know what you are doing. Good, my little eaglet! You shall be a ruler of men. You are strong, you are firm-set, you are plucky, and I respect you."

He was about to take the student's hand, but

Rastignac hastily withdrew it, and sank on a chair, turning deadly pale. He thought he saw in front of him a sea of blood.

"Aha! we still wear some of the baby's clothes of virtue about us, a little soiled, perhaps," said Vautrin, in a low voice. "But Papa Doliban has three millions; I know what he is worth. The dowry that your wife brings you will make you as white as her bridal dress, even in your own eyes."

Rastignac hesitated no more. He resolved to go that evening and warn the Taillefers, father and son. At this moment, Vautrin having moved away, Père Goriot came and whispered in Eugène's ear:

"You are melancholy, my boy. I am going to cheer you up, though; come with me!"

The old vermicelli-maker lit his candle at one of the lamps. Eugène followed him, wondering what it could be.

"Let us go into your room," said the old man, who had asked Sylvie for the student's key. "You thought this morning that she did not care for you, didn't you, eh?" he continued. "She sent you packing, and you took yourself off, as angry and miserable as you could be. Stuff and nonsense! She was expecting *me;* do you understand? We were to go and finish the arrangements for renting a jewel of an apartment in which you shall take up your abode in three days from now. You mustn't give me away; she wants you to have a surprise; but I can't bear to keep the secret from you any longer. You will live in the Rue d'Artois, a couple of paces from the Rue Saint-Lazare. You will be lodged like a prince; we have bought your furnishings fit for a bride. Ah, we have done a great deal

during the last month, without telling you anything about it. My attorney has taken the field; my daughter is to have her thirty-six thousand francs a year, the interest on her dowry, and I am going to insist that her eight hundred thousand francs shall be invested in good, reliable securities, that are all open to the day. . ."

Eugène was dumb, and walked with folded arms up and down his mean, untidy chamber. Père Goriot seized a moment when the student's back was turned towards him to place upon the mantel-piece a red morocco leather box, on which the Rastignac arms were stamped in gold.

"My dear boy," the poor old man went on, "I have been up to the neck in this business. But, you see, there was a good deal of selfishness in it, too. I have an interest of my own in the change of lodging that you are going to make. You won't refuse me, will you, if I ask you to grant me something?"

"What is it you want?"

"On the fifth floor, above your rooms, there is a small chamber which is let with them. I am going to live in that room, am I not? I am getting old, and I live too far from my daughters. I won't be in the way; only I shall be there; and you will come in and talk to me about her every night. You won't mind doing that, will you? When you come home I shall be in bed; but I shall hear you, and say to myself: 'he has just come from my little Delphine. He has taken her to a dance, and she is happy, thanks to *him*.' If I were ill, it would be like balm to my heart to hear you moving about in your room, and going out, and coming back. You will bring me so much of my daughter! I shall only have to walk a few steps to get to the Champs Elysées,

where they go daily, so I shall see them every time; whereas, at present, I sometimes get there too late. And then she will perhaps come to see you. I shall hear her, I shall see her in her quilted pelisse, tripping to and fro, and walking about as prettily as a kitten! During this last month she has become again all that she used to be, a young girl, brisk and gay. Her soul is undergoing a convalescence; she begins to be happy again, and she owes it all to you. Oh, I would do impossibilities to serve you. Only a little while ago she said to me, when we were coming back, 'Papa, I am so happy!' When they say just *Father*, in the formal way of speaking, it sends a chill through me; but when they call me *Papa*, I seem to see them little girls again; they give me back all my memories. I am more than ever their father then, and forget that they belong to anyone else, even now!"

The old man wiped his eyes; for he was weeping.

"It was such a long time since I heard this word, such a long time since she took my arm as she did to-day. Yes! It is quite ten years since I walked by the side of one of my daughters. How good it is to be touched by her dress, to keep step with her, to feel the warmth of her arm! In a word, I conducted Delphine this morning all about. I went shopping with her, and then I took her home again. Oh, keep me near you! You will sometimes want someone to do you a service, and I shall be there. Oh, if that great lump of an Alsatian would only die, if his gout had the good sense to attack him in the stomach, how happy my poor child would be! You would be my son-in-law, you would be her husband before the

world. Bah! she has had such a wretched time, had so little pleasure of this world, that I absolve her, whatever she does; and the Good God ought to be on the side of fathers who love their children. She is very fond of you," he added, raising his head, after a pause. "She talked of you all the time we were walking about: 'He is very good-looking, isn't he, father? And he is kind-hearted! Does he talk to you about me?' Bah! she said such things to me all the way from the Rue d'Artois to the Passage des Panoramas, volumes of such things. She poured her whole heart into mine! During all this happy morning I was no longer old, and I did not weigh an ounce. I told her that you had given up the thousand-franc note. Oh, the dear child, it moved her to tears! But what is that you have got on your mantel-piece?" said Père Goriot, at last; for Rastignac gave no sign of his interest, and the old man was dying of impatience.

Eugène, now immersed in dull bewilderment, stared stupidly at his neighbour. This duel, announced by Vautrin for to-morrow morning, was in such violent contrast with that realisation of his dearest hopes, which was now promised him, that the whole situation brought his mind into a state of nightmare subjection and horror. He turned towards the fire-place, and noticed the little square case. On opening it, he found a watch of Breguet's make, wrapped in paper. On the paper these words were written:

"I would have you think of me at every hour, because. . .

"DELPHINE."

The last word doubtless contained an allusion to some scene that had taken place between

them. Eugène felt touched by the words. The arms of his family were wrought in enamel on the inside of the gold watch-case. It was such a pretty belonging as he had often wished to have; the chain, the key, the workmanship, and the design, were all just what he should have desired. Père Goriot was radiant. No doubt he had promised to report to his daughter every little sign of the effect which this surprise produced on Eugène; for he was a partner in the high emotions of those young people, and appeared to be not the least happy of the three. He already loved Rastignac, both on his daughter's account and the young man's own.

"You will go and see her this evening; she is waiting for you. The great lout of an Alsatian is supping with his dancing-girl. Aha! he looked very foolish when my attorney told him where he was. Didn't he try to make out that he loved my daughter to adoration! Let him so much as lay a finger on her, and I will kill him. To think that my Delphine belongs to such a . . ."—he heaved a sigh—"it is enough to drive me to crime. But it would not really be homicide to kill that pig's carcass with the calf's head! You will take me with you, won't you?"

"Yes, my good Père Goriot; you know very well that I love you. . ."

"Yes, I see it; you are not ashamed of me, I know! Let me embrace you."

And he clasped the student in his arms.

"You will make her very happy, promise me that! You will go this evening, won't you?"

"Oh, yes. I *must* go out on business which cannot possibly be left over."

"Can I be of any service to you?"

"Faith, yes! While I go to Madame de

Nucingen, go you to old Taillefer's, and ask him to give me an appointment for some hour in the course of this evening. Say that I wish to speak to him about a matter of the utmost importance."

"Then it is true, is it, young man?" exclaimed Père Goriot, with a changed countenance. "It is true what those fools downstairs have been saying, and you are paying court to his daughter? . . . God's thunder! You don't seem to know what a tap *à la* Goriot is like. But if you think of playing us false, I shall have to give you *such* a blow. . . . Oh, the thing is impossible!"

"I swear to you that I love but one woman in the world," said the student; "and it is only at this hour that I have really learned to know it."

"Ah, you make me happy!" said Père Goriot.

"But," continued the student, "Taillefer's son is going to fight to-morrow morning, and I have heard it said that he is to be killed in that duel."

"What is that to you?" asked Goriot.

"Taillefer must be told of this," cried Eugène, "that he may prevent his son from keeping the appointment. . . ."

At this moment he was interrupted by the voice of Vautrin, who was standing in his own doorway, singing aloud:

"*O Richard, O my King!*
All the world's forsaking thee! . . .
Broum! broum! broum! brou n! broum!

I've travelled the world, both up and down,
And this has always . . . *tra la la la.*"

"Gentlemen!" called out Christophe, "the soup is on the table, and everybody is waiting for you."

"Here!" said Vautrin, "come and take down a bottle of my Bordeaux."

"You think the watch pretty, don't you?" said Père Goriot. "She has got taste, eh?"

Vautrin, Père Goriot, and Rastignac went downstairs together, and, owing to their late arrival, found themselves seated side by side at the table.

Eugène showed marked coldness in his manner toward Vautrin during the meal, although the latter, so agreeable as Madame Vauquer found him to be at all times, had never displayed such wit and vivacity as he did now. He fairly sparkled with bright sallies, and ended by setting the whole table a-going. This assurance, this self-possession of his, affected Eugène with a kind of dismay.

"You've walked on happy ground to-day, whatever it is!" said Madame Vauquer to Vautrin. "You're as merry as a lark!"

"I am always merry when I have done good business."

"Business?" said Eugène.

"Why, yes; I have effected a consignment of goods, on which I shall get a handsome commission. Mademoiselle Michonneau," he continued, on noticing that the old maid was scrutinising him curiously, "is there some feature of my face which displeases you, that you eye me in that fashion? Tell me what it is at once, and I shall change it to oblige you. . . *We* shouldn't fall out about that, should we, Poiret?" he added, with a meaning look at the superannuated clerk.

"By the Great Paper Bag!" cried the young painter, "you ought to be posed as the Comic Hercules!"

"Done, my boy!" cried Vautrin, "on condition that Mademoiselle Michonneau consents to pose as the Venus of Père Lachaise."

"And what of Poiret?" asked Bianchon.

"Oh, Poiret shall pose as Poiret. He shall be the God of Gardens. His name, coming from Pear (*Poire*), he is. . . ."

"*Sleepy*," struck in Bianchon, "a sleepy Pear! So *you* will come in between the pear and the cheese."

"Now you're getting stupid," said Madame Vauquer, "and you would be doing better if you gave us a taste of your Bordeaux—I see the nose of a bottle peeping up over there! That will keep us all in good-humour, besides that it is very good for the stomach."

"Gentlemen," said Vautrin, "the Lady President calls us to order! Madame Couture and Mademoiselle Victorine will not take offence at your playful conversation; but respect, I pray you, the innocence of Père Goriot. I now propose to unseal a little bottle-orama of wine of Bordeaux, rendered doubly illustrious by the name of Lafitte, if I may say so much without injury to any man's politics. What ho, Chinee!" he said, looking at Christophe, who did not move. "Come hither, Christophe! What, know you not your own name when it is spoken? Chinaman, I say, bring in the liquor!"

"Here it is, sir," said Christophe, handing him the bottle.

He filled the wine-glasses of Eugène and Père Goriot, and then very slowly poured a little into his own. He sipped at it deliberately, while his neighbours drank theirs off. Suddenly he made a wry face.

"Faugh! the Devil!" he exclaimed; "it's

corky. Take that bottle for yourself, Christophe, and go and fetch us another. In the right-hand corner—you understand? There's sixteen of us, so bring down eight bottles!"

"Seeing that you are standing treat," said the painter, "I shall pay for a hundred chestnuts."

"Oh, oh!"

"Booououh!"

"Prrrr!"

A crackle of cries and exclamations burst from all round the table, like the exploding squibs of a firework set.

"Now, then, Mamma Vauquer!" called out Vautrin, "you must contribute two bottles of champagne."

"How much more? Why don't you ask for my house itself? Two bottles of champagne, indeed—they would cost twelve francs, and I don't make that amount. But if Monsieur Eugène will pay for the champagne, I will contribute some currant cordial."

"That currant cordial of hers—it's a regular physicker!" said the medical student in a low voice.

"Be quiet, Bianchon," cried Eugène. "you'll give my stomach such a turn. . . Yes, fetch the champagne, I will pay for it," he added.

"Sylvie," said Madame Vauquer, "bring the biscuits and the little cakes."

"Your little cakes are too big, now," said Vautrin. "They have grown a beard. But let's have the biscuits."

The Bordeaux presently began to circulate, the boarders waxed animated, and redoubled their gaiety. Loud peals of laughter were mingled with the shrill imitations of every kind of animal

voice. The official from the Museum had been inspired to give a rendering of a Paris street-cry which had some resemblance to the mewing of an amorous cat, and forthwith eight voices bellowed at a single instant the following phrases:

"Knives and scissors to grind!"

"Chickweed and Groundsel for the little bi-i-i-i-rd!"

"What d'ye lack, ladies? What d'ye lack?"

"Any old china to mend!"

"To the boat! This way to the boat!"

"Canes to beat your wives or your coats!"

"Any old clo'es, old lace, old hats to sell!"

"Cherries all ripe!"

But the palm was assigned to Bianchon for the nasal accent in which he called out:

"Umbrellas to me-end!"

In a few minutes there was a racket loud enough to break your head, a conversational babel of riotous nonsense, a veritable opera, with Vautrin as conductor of the orchestra, his eye being all the time directed towards Eugène and Père Goriot. Those two appeared to be intoxicated already, and sat, leaning back in their chairs, looking on at this unusual disorder with serious eyes, but hardly seeming to take any of it in. They were both preoccupied with what they had to do that evening, and yet they felt somehow unable to rise and go about their business. Vautrin watched with sidelong glances every change in their expression; and just as their eyelids were wavering and about to close, he bent over Rastignac and whispered in his ear:

"My little lad, we are not fly enough to fight against our Papa Vautrin; and he is too fond of you to allow you to do anything foolish! When I

have made up my mind to do a thing, the good Lord in Heaven is the only person strong enough to bar my way. Ah, we were going to warn old Taillefer—tell tales out of school, eh? The oven is hot, the dough is kneaded, the loaf is on the baking-tray, and to-morrow we are to eat our fill of it and send the crumbs flying—and yet we would keep it out of the oven, would we?. . . No, no; everything shall be done to a turn! If some little scruples remain to trouble us, a good digestion will carry them off. While we are having our little nap, Colonel Comte Franchessini will lay open for you the succession to Michel Taillefer's fortune with the point of his sword. In stepping into her brother's place, Victorine will inherit fifteen nice little thousand francs a-year. I have inquired into the matter, and I know that her mother's fortune amounted to more than three hundred thousand. . ."

Eugène heard all this, but was unable to reply; his tongue seemed glued to the roof of his mouth, and an irresistible drowsiness held him down. He had ceased to see the table and the figures around it, save through a luminous haze. By and by the noise died away, and the boarders withdrew, one by one, till there remained in the room only Madame Vauquer, Madame Couture, Mademoiselle Victorine, and Père Goriot. Then, as though in a dream, Eugène saw Madame Vauquer busy collecting the bottles and filling one or two with what remained at the bottom of the others.

"Ah, *they* can be foolish, because they are young," said the widow.

These were the last words that Eugène was conscious of hearing.

"There is no one but M. Vautrin for getting up

these performances," said Sylvie. "Just listen to Christophe! He is snoring like a humming-top."

"Adieu, Mamma," said Vautrin. "I am off to the boulevard to admire M. Marty in *Le Mont Sauvage*, a grand play founded on *Le Solitaire*. . If you like, I will take you to see it; and those ladies might come with us, too."

"I cannot come, thank you," said Madame Couture.

"What! my dear lady," cried Madame Vauquer, "you decline to see a play founded on *Le Solitaire*, one of the works of Atala de Chateaubriand! Why, we were so fond of that book, and so pretty a tale it is, that we wept like Magdalens under the lime-trees when we read it, last summer—yes, and a moral work, it is, from which your young lady might draw a great deal of instruction!"

"We are forbidden to go to the theatre," answered Victorine.

"Well, those two are done for," said Vautrin, shaking the heads of Père Goriot and of Eugène with an air of amusement. Then he placed the student in such a position, with his head supported on the back of the chair, that he might sleep more comfortably. In doing this he stooped and kissed the student on the brow, and sang:

"*Safely, dears, your slumber take—*
I for you shall keep awake!"

"I am afraid he may be ill," said Victorine.

"Then stay and take care of him," said Vautrin. "It is your duty," he whispered in her ear, "as a fond and faithful wife. He adores you, this young man does, and you *are* going to

be his little wife. I prophesy it. In a word," he said aloud, "*they were held in great esteem throughout the whole land, and lived happily, and had a great many children.*" That is the closing passage of every Love-Romance of old. Come, Mamma," he said, turning to Madame Vauquer, and putting his arm around her waist, "put on your bonnet, and your best robe of flowered silk, and the Comtesse's scarf, while I go look for a cab. . . all my very self."

And he went off singing:

"*Sun, Sun, glorious sun*
That ripens the pumkins one by one. . . ."

"Good Lord, did you ever know the like! Why, Madame Couture, with such a man as that I could be happy in a garret. . . Just look at old Goriot!" she added, turning towards the vermicelli-maker; "he is quite away with it. *He* never thought, the miserly old crab, to take me anywheres. Why, good Lord! he is ready to fall off that chair. It is most indecent for a man of his age to lose his senses like that. You will tell me, though, that he can't lose what he hasn't got. Sylvie, take him up to his room."

Sylvie caught the old man under the arm, helped him upstairs, and then threw him across the bed as though he were a parcel, and left him without even loosening his collar.

"Poor young man," said Madame Couture, pushing aside Eugène's hair, which was falling over his eyes; "he is just like a young girl, and does not know what dissipation is."

"Ah, yes!" said Madame Vauquer, "I have kept a boarding-house for one-and-thirty years, and a good many young people have passed through my hands, as the saying is, in that time;

but I am bold to say that not one of them was ever so nice a young man, or so distinguished with it all, as Monsieur Eugène. Doesn't he look handsome in his sleep. Take his head on your shoulder, Madame Couture; bah! he falls aside towards Mademoiselle Victorine's instead. There is a Power that takes care of children, that is sure; else he'd have broken his head against the knob of that chair. Put them together, and they'd make a pretty couple, those two!"

"My dear lady, do be quiet!" cried Madame Couture. "You say things which. . ."

"Bah!" quoth Madame Vauquer; "he does not understand a word. Come along, Sylvie, and help me to dress. I shall wear my best stays."

"What! wear your best stays after you have dined, Madame?" said Sylvie. "No, indeed—you may find somebody else to lace you, for I'm not going to have a hand in your murder. It is as much as your life is worth to do anything so foolish."

"I don't care; I *must* wear them, in honour of M. Vautrin."

"Are you so very fond of your heirs, then?"

"Come along, Sylvie, and don't argue," said the widow, as she left the room.

"At her age, too!" said Sylvie to Victorine, pointing to her mistress as she spoke.

Madame Couture and her ward were left alone in the dining-room. Eugène was still asleep, his head supported on Victorine's shoulder. The snoring of Christophe resounded through the now silent house, and was in marked contrast to the quiet slumber of Eugène, who breathed as gently as a child in his sleep. Happy in an occasion which permitted her to perform one of

those acts of loving kindness into which a woman sheds all the instinctive affection of her nature, and which now so placed her that, without any fault against modesty, she could feel the young man's heart beating close to her own—Victorine wore at this moment a look that was full of maternal and protective feeling, and of a conscious pride in her dear office. Through all the thousand thoughts which rose in her heart there ran a tumultuous thrill of joy begotten by this pure contact of the warm young bodies.

"Poor dear child!" said Madame Couture, pressing her hand.

The old lady gazed in wonder at the innocent and patient face of the young girl, upon whose head a heavenly aureole of happiness had descended. Victorine recalled one of those naive mediæval pictures, in which the artist has disregarded every accessory, and has reserved all the magic of his brush, its peace and its power, for the rendering of the mellow paleness of the face, upon which, pale though it be, the golden hues of heaven are all reflected.

"He really only drank two glasses, no more than that, mamma," said Victorine, passing her fingers through Eugène's hair.

"To be sure, my dear, if he had been a dissipated young man, he would have been able to carry his wine as well as the rest. His intoxication is an honour to him."

There was a sound of carriage-wheels in the street.

"Mamma, here is M. Vautrin coming. Please take Monsieur Eugène now. I should not like that man to catch sight of me like this. He has expressions which leave one's soul unclean, and

ways of looking at one that seem to — to take away one's clothes."

"Oh, no, you are mistaken, child," said Madame Couture. "M. Vautrin is a worthy man, rough but good-hearted. He reminds me a little of my late husband, M. Couture—a kind act and a brusque word, that's his way."

Vautrin stepped into the room quietly while she was speaking. He gazed for a time on the picture formed by the two young people, whom the light from the lamp seemed to touch with a caress.

"Well, now!" said he, folding his arms. "Here is a scene which would have inspired that good Bernardine de Saint-Pierre, author of *Paul and Virginia*, to the writing of a beautiful page or two, I'll warrant. Ah, Madame Couture, youth is the beautiful age!—Sleep, poor child," he said, looking down at Eugène; "Fortune sometimes comes to us in our sleep! Madame," he continued, turning again to the widow, "what attaches me to this young man, what really goes to my heart, is the knowing that the beauty of his nature is in full harmony with those good looks of his that we admire. Just see there—the head of one of the cherubim leaning on the shoulder of an angel! Ah, he is worth loving, if ever one was! If I were a woman I should wish to die—no, nothing so stupid!—to live for him. While one looks and wonders at those two, Madame," he said in a low voice, bending to whisper in the widow's ear—"I cannot help thinking that God made them for one another.—Yes, Providence moves in secret ways, searching the reins and the heart," he exclaimed aloud. "In seeing you thus united, my children, united by an equal purity of nature, and

by every human affection, I cannot believe that your lives will ever be sundered in the future. God is just.—Why," he said, turning toward the young girl, "I think I have noticed that you have the lines of prosperity. Give me your hand, Mademoiselle Victorine; I know something about chiromancy, and I have foretold many a good fortune in my time. Come, don't be frightened. Oh! what do I see here? As true as I am an honest man, you will be one of the richest heiresses in Paris, and that before long. You will heap happiness on one who loves you. Your father will call you to his side. You will marry a man of title, who is young and handsome, and who adores you."

At this point Vautrin's prophecies were interrupted by the heavy footfall of the coquettish widow, who was coming downstairs

"Here is Mamma Vauquerre, fair as a star-r-r, and as smart as a carrot! But aren't we just a little bit choky, eh?" and as he spoke he placed his hand on the top of the busk—"a little bit tightly packed in front, I'm sure, Mamma! If we are moved to tears, there will be an explosion. Never mind; I shall collect the fragments with the devotion of an antiquary."

"*There* is a man who knows the true language of French gallantry," whispered the widow in Madame Couture's ear.

"Adieu, my children!" continued Vautrin, turning towards Eugène and Victorine. "I bless you," he said, placing a hand upon the head of each. "Believe me, Mademoiselle, the prayers of an honest man are worth something. They should bring you happiness, for God hears them."

"Good-bye, my dear friend," said Madame

Vauquer to her boarder. "Do you think," she added, in a lower voice, "that M. Vautrin has any intentions towards me?"

"Alas and alack!"

"Oh, Mamma dear," said Victorine with a sigh, when they were alone again; "supposing what that kind M. Vautrin said should come true!" And she gazed into her own hand.

"Why, only one thing needs to happen for it to come true," said the old lady. "Your monster of a brother has just to fall from his horse and. . . ."

"Oh, Mamma!"

"Good Lord! Perhaps it is a sin to wish harm to one's enemies," the widow went on. "Well, I shall do penance for it. All the same, I should bring flowers to his grave with a cheerful heart. The coward! he had not the courage to say a word in defence of his own mother, whose fortune he has got hold of and keeps from you by mere trickeries. My cousin had a very fine fortune of her own, but, unluckily for you, nothing was said in the marriage settlement about any inheritance that might accrue to her later."

"My good fortune would be very hard to bear, if it had to cost some one else his life," said Victorine. "And if happiness cannot come to me except by my brother going out of the world, I would rather stay in this boarding-house all my days."

"*Mon Dieu*, as that kind-hearted M. Vautrin says, who, as you see, is full of religion," answered Madame Couture—"and very happy I am to know that he is not an infidel like the rest of them, who will speak of God with less respect than they do of the Devil—well, as M. Vautrin

says, *who* knows by what ways Providence may be pleased to lead us?"

With Sylvie's help, the two ladies at last got Eugène up to his room and laid him on the bed, Sylvie loosening his clothes to make him more comfortable. Before they left the room, Victorine took the opportunity, her guardian's back being turned, of pressing a kiss on Eugène's brow, and experienced in doing so all the joy which such an act of rapine was calculated to afford. Then she looked around this room of his, and gathering up, so to say, into a single thought, all the felicities of that one day, she thereof made a picture which she gazed upon long and long, and finally fell asleep, the happiest living thing in Paris.

The merry-making which had given Vautrin his opportunity of drugging Eugène and Père Goriot, proved to be his own ruin. Bianchon, becoming a little muzzy, forgot to question Mademoiselle Michonneau about Trompe-la-Mort. The mere mention of this name would have put Vautrin on his guard—or rather, to give him his real name, Jacques Collin, for Vautrin was in fact that very celebrated personage of the Prison-house. But it was that jest about the Venus of Père Lachaise which proximately and definitely sealed his fate. For it decided Mademoiselle Michonneau to betray the convict to the police, whereas until that moment she had been figuring out in her own mind whether it would not be better worth her while, trusting to Collin's generosity for a handsome reward, to warn him of the danger and help him to get away during the night. So, while the things we have just related were taking place, she had just gone out along with Poiret with the intention of seeking,

at the Petite Rue Sainte-Anne, the famous Chief of Detectives—still under the impression, however, that she had to do with a mere upper grade official name Gondureau. The director of the intelligence department received her very courteously. Then, after a conversation in which everything was definitely arranged and agreed upon, Mademoiselle Michonneau asked for the drug that was to help her to succeed in "verifying" the convict brand. As the great man of the Petite Rue Sainte-Anne sought out a phial from a drawer in his bureau, his looks betrayed such a degree of satisfaction that Mademoiselle Michonneau at once suspected there was something more important involved in this enterprise than the mere recapture of a convict. By dint of thinking very hard, she arrived at the notion that the police, with the help of revelations made to them by some one of the convicts who had turned traitor, were in hopes of being able to lay their hands on a large haul of money. She expressed something of her suspicions to the Chief; but this official fox only smiled, and set himself to put the notion out of her head.

"You are under a misapprehension," he said. "Collin is the most dangerous *sorbonne* that has ever been found on the side of the criminal classes. That is all. The rogues know it well; he is their flag, their strength and stay, their Bonaparte, in fact. They all love him. This fine fellow will never leave his *tronche* in the Place de Grève."

Mademoiselle Michonneau could not follow this; so Gondureau explained the meaning of the two slang terms which he used. *Sorbonne* and *tronche* are two vigorous expressions taken from the vernacular of thieves, these having been the

first class of persons who felt the need of being able to regard the human head under two aspects. The *sorbonne* is the head of a living man, his faculty of counsel and thought. The *tronche* is a term of contempt, expressive of the worthlessness of that head when it has been severed from its attachments.

"Collin is playing a game with us," he continued. "But when we have to deal with a man of his kind—a man like a steel bar tempered in the English fashion—we have always one resource; we can kill him if he takes it into his head to offer the least resistance. We are reckoning on some attempt at violence on his part to-morrow morning, for a chance of killing Collin outright. In this way one obviates all the bother of a trial and the expenses of guarding him in prison and keeping him in food and clothing; and society is made rid of a nuisance quietly. What with all the preparatory legal work, and the citation of witnesses, and the payment of their fees, and then the costs of the execution—one thing and another, the disbursements which we would have to make in order to get rid of one of those good-for-nothings in a legal way, would come to more than the thousand crowns which we are paying you. Then there is the saving of time. By contriving one good bayonet push in the belly of Trompe-la-Mort, we shall keep a hundred crimes from being committed, and shall prevent fifty worthless scamps from deciding for a life of crime, by inspiring them with a salutary fear of the civil executive. That is doing the work of Police as it should be done, with effect; and the teachings of true philanthropy make it clear that to act thus is to prevent the perpetration of crime."

"And it is serving one's country," said Poiret.

"Why, you are talking very sensibly to-night, very sensibly sir. You are right; we do serve our country, and the world does not treat us very well for it, either. We do society many a great service for which there is no recognition whatever. However, the man of superior mind must rise above prejudices, and the Christian ought to resign himself to the drawbacks which attend well-doing when it is not done quite in accordance with received notions. Paris is Paris, you see: in that phrase you have the key to my life. I have the honour to wish you good evening, Mademoiselle. I shall be at the Jardin du Roi with my men in the morning. Send Christophe to the Rue de Buffon and tell him to ask for M. Gondureau, in the place where you saw me before. Sir, your servant! Should you ever have anything stolen, come here and I will help you recover it. I am always at your service."

"Well, now!" said Poiret to Mademoiselle Michonneau, "there are silly people whose wits are turned upside-down at the mere mention of the word 'police'; and yet that gentleman was most pleasant-spoken, and what he asks you to do is as simple as saying 'Good morning.'"

The following day was destined to rank among the most remarkable days in the history of the Maison Vauquer. Thus far the most sensational incident in the equable course of its existence had been the meteoric passage therethrough of the pretended Comtesse de l'Ambermesnil. But that, and everything else, was to pale before the lurid events of this tremendous day, which was to supply Madame Vauquer with an inexhaustible subject of conversation for all future time. To begin with, Goriot and Eugène de Rastignac

slept till eleven o'clock. Madame Vauquer, who had returned from the Gaîté at midnight, stayed in bed till half-past ten. Then the prolonged slumber of Christophe, due to his having finished the wine that Vautrin gave him, caused the whole service of the house to be behind-hand that morning. Poiret and Mademoiselle Michonneau were not disposed to make a grievance of breakfast being late. As for Victorine and Madame Couture, they also slept long that morning. Vautrin went out about eight o'clock and came back just as breakfast was being served. Nobody had any fault to find, then, when Sylvie and Christophe went knocking at all the doors at a quarter past eleven to say that breakfast was ready. Mademoiselle Michonneau was the first to come downstairs, and she took the occasion of the two servants being out of the room to pour the liquid she had got on the previous evening into the cream in Vautrin's silver cup—which was standing among the others in the *bain-marie*, being kept hot ready for the coffee. The old maid had counted on this daily practice in the boarding-house to help her in carrying out her purpose. The seven boarders were at last, and not without difficulty, united round the breakfast table. Eugène came down last of all, stretching his arms to wake himself; and was met by a messenger who handed him a letter from Madame de Nucingen. The letter ran as follows:

"I have neither any factitious vanity nor anger in my relation to you, *mon ami*. I have waited for you till two in the morning. To wait for one whom one loves—nobody who has known this torture would inflict it on another! It is well to be seen that you have never loved before.

But what has happened? I am full of uneasiness to know. Were it not for the fear of betraying the secrets of my heart, I should have come to find out what had happened you, whether it was good or evil. But to go abroad at this hour, whether on foot or in one's carriage—it would mean ruin, would it not? I have felt how unfortunate it is to be a woman. Send me a word of assurance, tell me why it is you did not come, after what you said to my father. I shall be vexed, but I shall forgive you. Are you unwell? Why live so far away? Send me a word, for pity's sake. You are coming soon, are you not? If you are busy, I shall be satisfied with a word. Say 'I am coming at once,' or 'I am unwell.' But if you were ill, my father would have come to tell me! What is it, then, that has happened? . ."

"Yes, what is it that has happened?" cried Eugène. He crumpled the letter without stopping to finish reading it, and hastened into the dining-room. "What time is it?"

"Half-past eleven," said Vautrin, putting a lump of sugar into his coffee.

The escaped convict threw towards Eugène that glance of chill fascination which is the property of some men of exceptional magnetic power, and which, it is said, can calm the nerves of maniacal lunatics in the asylums of the insane. Eugène shook in all his limbs. There was a sound of wheels in the street; and presently a manservant in the livery of Monsieur Taillefer—which Madame Couture recognised at a glance—entered the room hurriedly with a scared look.

"Mademoiselle," he cried, "your father wishes to see you. . . . A terrible calamity has occurred. M. Frédéric has fought a duel and has

received a sword thrust in the brow, and the doctors despair of saving him. You will scarcely have time to bid him good-bye. He is already unconscious."

"Poor young man!" cried Vautrin. "Why will people fight when they have an income of thirty good thousand francs a year? Truly, youth does not know how to behave itself."

"Sir!" cried Eugène.

"Well, what now, you great baby?" said Vautrin, drinking the last of his coffee with great tranquillity; an operation which Mademoiselle Michonneau watched with such close attention that she escaped being moved in the least by the extraordinary event which had thrown into a state of amazement everybody else at the table. "Are there not duels fought every morning in Paris?"

"I shall go with you, Victorine," said Madame Couture.

And so those two ladies flew away without hat or shawl. But before she went, Victorine looked at Eugène with her eyes full of tears, and said: "I did not think that our happiness should have given me cause to weep."

"My goodness! then you are a prophet, M. Vautrin?" said Madame Vauquer.

"I am all sorts of things," said Jacques Collin.

"How strange it is!" continued Madame Vauquer, and she proceeded to make her way through a series of observations, all of them meaning nothing, regarding this event, such as:—"Death takes us without asking our leave. The young often depart before the old. We are well off, we women, in not being subject to duels; but we have other maladies that men are free from. We bear children, and the mother is often a long time in getting well. What a windfall for Vic-

torine! Her father will have to acknowledge her now."

"There!" said Vautrin, looking at Eugène, "yesterday she had not a sou; this morning she is worth several millions."

"I say, Monsieur Eugène," cried Madame Vauquer—"you have happened on a good thing."

At this remark Père Goriot looked at the student and saw the crumpled letter in his hand.

"You have not read it to the end! What does she wish to say? Are you going to be like the rest of them?" he asked him.

"Madame, I shall never marry Mademoiselle Victorine," said Eugène, addressing Madame Vauquer, and speaking with an expression of horror and loathing which amazed all the spectators of this scene.

Père Goriot seized the student's hand and clasped it hard. He would willingly have kissed it.

"Ha! ha!" said Vautrin, "the Italians have a good phrase: *col tempo!*"

"I am waiting for the reply," said Madame de Nucingen's messenger to Rastignac.

"Say that I shall come."

The man withdrew. Eugène was in a state of high nervous excitement which made it impossible for him to be prudent.

"What shall I do!" he exclaimed aloud, addressing himself alone. "There is not a single proof!"

Vautrin smiled quietly. By this time his stomach had begun to absorb the drug, and its effects were beginning to manifest themselves. Nevertheless, the convict's constitution was of such strength and vigour that he still rose to his feet. Looking at Rastignac, he said in a hollow voice:

"Young man, fortune comes to us in sleep."

And he fell to the ground rigid, as though death had smote him.

"So there is a Divine Justice after all!" cried Eugène.

"Dear me, whatever can be the matter with that poor dear M. Vautrin?"

"A fit!" cried Mademoiselle Michonneau.

"Sylvie, my dear, go and bring a doctor at once," said the widow.—"Oh, M. Rastignac, do run and bring M. Bianchon; Sylvie may perhaps not find our doctor, M. Grimprel."

Rastignac went off at a run, thankful to have an excuse for leaving that den of horrors.

"Here, Christophe, run round to the chemist's and ask him to give you something that is good for apoplexy."

Christophe left the house.

"Now then, Père Goriot, give us a hand to get him upstairs to his own room."

Vautrin was taken hold of and, by careful management, was manœuvred up the staircase and laid upon his bed.

"I cannot be of any use to you," said M. Goriot; "I shall go and see my daughter."

"You selfish old wretch!" cried Madame Vauquer; "go, and I hope you will die like a dog."

"You might go and see if you have any ether." The remark was addressed to Madame Vauquer by Mademoiselle Michonneau, who had already, with Poiret's assistance, unfastened Vautrin's clothes.

Madame Vauquer went down to her own room, leaving Mademoiselle Michonneau sole mistress of the field of battle.

"Now then, pull back his shirt and turn him round, quick! You might make yourself of

some use in saving me from shame," she said to Poiret, "instead of standing there like a stock."

Vautrin having been turned on his face, Mademoiselle Michonneau gave a sharp slap on his shoulder, and the two fatal letters came out in white against the surrounding red.

"There! you have earned your three thousand francs in quick style," said Poiret, as he held up Vautrin, while Mademoiselle Michonneau put on his shirt again. "*Ouf*, how heavy he is!" he continued, as he laid him on the pillow.

"Hush!. . . suppose there was a strong box?" said the old maid, with animation. She examined the smallest furnishings in the room with such avidity that her eyes seemed to pierce the very walls. "If we could open that desk on some pretext or other?" she went on.

"That might not be honest, perhaps," answered Poiret.

"Not a bit!" she answered. "The money was stolen, and belonged to all sorts of people; so it belongs to nobody at all now. But we haven't the time; I hear la Vauquer."

"Here is the ether," said Madame Vauquer. "My goodness, what a day of adventures this has been. Lord, that man can never be in a fit; he is as white as a chicken."

"As a chicken?" repeated Poiret.

"His heart beats steadily," said the widow, placing her hand upon his breast.

"Steadily?" said the astonished Poiret.

"He is all right."

"You think he is all right?" asked Poiret.

"God Lord! he looks as if he were asleep. Sylvie has gone for a doctor. I say, Mademoiselle Michonneau, he is sniffing at the ether. Pooh! it is only a spasm; his pulse is going well. He

is as strong as a Turk. Just see, Mademoiselle, what a fur-tippet he's got on his chest—he'll live for a hundred years, that man. Doesn't his wig stick on tightly, though—why, it is glued on! He has got red hair—that is why he wears a wig. They do say that they are either very good or very bad, those red-haired people. I should say he was one of the good ones, eh?"

"Good to hang," said Poiret.

"Round a pretty woman's neck, you mean," cried Mademoiselle Michonneau, briskly. "Please take yourself off, M. Poiret. It is the work of us women to look after you men when you are in sickness. And, indeed, for all the use you are here, you might as well be taking a walk," she added. "Madame Vauquer and I will look after dear M. Vautrin." And quietly, and without a murmur, like a dog whom his master has kicked aside, Poiret slunk from the room.

Rastignac had gone out for the sake of physical exertion, of fresh air; for his mind felt stifled. The crime which, yesterday evening, he had been eager to prevent, had been carried out this morning at the appointed hour. What had happened? What was he to do? He trembled at the thought that he might prove to have been an accomplice in the deed, and he still felt the involuntary dread inspired by Vautrin's cold-blooded serenity.

"Supposing Vautrin were to die without speaking?" he asked himself.

He went along the alleys of the Luxembourg as if he were hunted by a whole kennel of bloodhounds, and already he seemed to hear the bayings of the pack.

"Well," exclaimed Bianchon, stopping him, "have you seen the *Pilote?*"

The *Pilote* was a Radical sheet, edited by M. Tissot. A special edition of this was published a few hours later than the other morning newspapers, for transmission to the provinces, and thus brought the news of the day to the knowledge of country readers some twenty-four hours earlier than the local papers would have done.

"There's quite a wonderful story in it," said the house-student of the Hôpital Cochin; "young Taillefer has fought a duel with Count Franchessini, of the Old Guard, and the Count has put two inches of steel into his forehead. So, our little Victorine is one of the most wealthy young unmarried women in Paris! If we had only known that, eh? What a game of chance Death plays with us! Is it true, by the way, that Victorine looked upon you—you, my dear boy—with an eye of kindness?"

"Be quiet, Bianchon; I shall never marry *her*. I am in love with a charming woman, who loves me in return, and I. . ."

"My dear fellow, you talk a little as if you were trying to whip yourself into the mood of fidelity, with those impassioned phrases. But I should like to see the woman who is worth the sacrifice of old Taillefer's fortune."

"Are all the devils in Hell turned loose, then, to hunt me!" cried Rastignac.

"Why, what is the matter with you? Are you gone crazy? Give me your hand, till I feel your pulse. You are in a fever."

"Go at once to Mother Vauquer's—that scoundrel Vautrin has fallen down as if he were struck dead."

"Aha!" said Bianchon. "You confirm certain suspicions of mine—I must be off, and find

out whether they are well founded!" And he left Rastignac without more ado.

The law student walked up and down for a long time, occupied with thoughts which made this a grave and memorable moment of his life. He was taking, so to say, a survey of his own conscience. And if he scrutinised, and questioned, and doubted the complexion of many of his thoughts, yet in the end his probity issued from that keen and terrible ordeal well-proven, like a bar of steel which has borne the touch of every test. He remembered what Père Goriot had confided to him on the previous evening, and now he recalled that talk about rooms taken for him in the Rue d'Artois, where he would be near to Delphine. Then he took out her letter again, and re-read it, and kissed it.

"Such a love as hers is the sheet-anchor of my life. That poor old man's heart has suffered much," he said to himself. "He says nothing about his sorrows, indeed; but who could not guess what they have been? Well, I shall care for him, now, as though he were my father. I shall give him a thousand occasions for happiness. If she loves me, she will often come to my rooms and spend the day near him. That aristocratic Comtesse de Restaud is a disgraceful creature, who would make a door-keeper of her own father. Dear Delphine! She is worthy of love, for she is kind to the poor old man. Ah! this evening I shall be so happy!"

He took out the watch and admired it.

"Fortune has favoured me in everything! And when people love truly, and for always, they are free to give and receive help of each other. So, I may accept this gift—besides, I shall succeed, without a doubt, and then shall be able to repay

for everything a hundredfold. There is nothing criminal in this relation of ours—nothing that even the severest virtue need knit its brows at. How many respectable people there are who have formed similar unions! It is the deception that makes such relationships degrading, and we deceive no one. To deceive is to deny one's own right, to debase oneself, to abdicate. She has been living in separation from her husband for a long time now. Besides, I shall call upon that husband, that Alsatian, to surrender to me the wife whom he cannot make happy."

Rastignac's battle with himself lasted a long time; and though the victory was sure to rest in the end with the natural virtues of youth, yet about a quarter-past four, when the darkness began to fall, he felt impelled by an invincible curiosity to return to the Maison Vauquer. He had inwardly resolved to quit that place for ever, but at present he wished to know whether Vautrin was dead.

Bianchon had bethought him to give Vautrin an emetic, and had then sent the expelled matters round to the Hospital so that they might be submitted to chemical analysis. His suspicions grew yet stronger when he saw how insistently Mademoiselle Michonneau tried to keep this from being done. Besides this, Vautrin recovered so quickly that Bianchon had no choice but to believe that the jovial leader of all the merriments of the boarding-house had been the victim of some plotters' practice or other. When Rastignac returned, then, Vautrin was standing near the stove in the dining-room. All the other boarders, with the exception of Père Goriot, were already in the room, and were busy chatting about the duel, and young Taillefer's fate. They

had, in fact, been drawn together earlier than usual, by their curiosity to know all the circumstances of that affair, and the influence it was likely to have on Victorine's position. As Rastignac entered the room, his eye met those of the imperturbable Vautrin, whose glance went so deeply into his soul, and touched some evil chords there with so strange a power, that Eugène shivered under the spell.

"Well, my dear boy," said the escaped convict, "Death is going to miss its mark on me for a long time yet. According to those ladies, I have triumphantly withstood an apoplectic stroke that should have killed an ox."

"Oh, you might say a bull, in fact," exclaimed the widow Vauquer.

"Are you sorry, then, to see that I am still alive?" said Vautrin in Rastignac's ear; for he fancied he knew what was in the student's mind. "You'd have to be devilish sure of yourself for that!"

"Oh, by the way," said Bianchon, "Mademoiselle Michonneau was talking the day before yesterday of a gentleman called *Trompe-la-Mort*. That name would suit you very well."

At the mention of this name, Vautrin seemed struck by a thunderbolt. He staggered for a moment, and turned pale. Then his magnetic glance fell, like a streak of light, on Mademoiselle Michonneau. The old maid quailed and trembled under the shock of his swift intelligence, and sank helplessly into a chair. Poiret, fearing that she was in danger, stepped quickly between her and Vautrin; for now that the escaped convict had dropped the mask of his everyday wear, his true nature expressed itself in a look of ferocity and menace. None of the

other boarders knew, thus far, what was the matter, and therefore beheld these movements in mute astonishment. Whilst they still gazed, there was suddenly heard the tramping of feet from without, and the rattle of soldiers' muskets on the pavement. Collin, like one in abstraction, looked round the walls, and at the windows, for a way of escape; but at that moment four men entered by way of the sitting-room. The first was the Chief of Detectives, and the three others were warrant officers.

"In the name of the Law and the King!" said one of the officers, amidst a murmur of astonishment which almost drowned his words.

The murmur died, and there was absolute silence in the room. The boarders drew apart to make way for the three officers, each of whom had his right hand upon a cocked pistol in his side-pocket. Behind these appeared two gendarmes, who kept the door leading from the sitting-room; and two others were now seen guarding the exit towards the staircase. From the garden was heard the sound of footsteps, and the rattle of soldiers' muskets on the cobbled path that ran along the façade. Thus every possibility of escape was cut off from Trompe-la-Mort, on whom all eyes were now rivetted. The Chief walked straight up to him, and began operations by giving him such a sharp blow on the head that his wig fell off, and the head of Collin was laid bare in all its ugliness. That face and head, made more formidable in appearance by the stubby crop of brick-red hair, seemed to express a character frightfully compounded of force and cunning. Head and face were in harmony with the powerful build of his body, and his whole bearing and look just then

seemed lurid, as though the fires of hell had lighted up his nature. At that moment everyone present could suddenly read the heart of his mystery, knew the man Vautrin in all his range: his past, his future, his implacable doctrines, the religion of his good pleasure, the sovereignty over men which he had won by the cynicism of his intelligence and of his deeds, and by virtue of a physical organisation that was capable of everything. The blood mounted to his face, and his eyes gleamed like the eyes of a wild-cat. He started back with a movement of savage and convulsive energy, and with such a growl of anger that cries of alarm at once broke from all the boarders. Seeing this lion-like movement of the hunted man, and seizing the pretext which these cries of terror afforded, the officers quickly drew their pistols. On catching sight of the gleaming muzzles of those weapons, Collin at once comprehended the danger that menaced him, and thereupon, in a single instant, gave proof of the highest powers that man can show. The conflict of passions and the abrupt transformation of feeling which his features then betrayed, formed a spectacle that was at once horrible in its violence, and fraught with a certain human majesty of will and soul: he was like a cauldron charged with that seething steam which is capable of moving a mountain from its base, and yet the force of which is annulled in an instant by a single drop of cold water. The drop of water which quenched his rage was a reflection which passed through his mind like a flash of lightning. He began to smile, and looked down at his wig.

"You are not in your politest form to-day," he said to the Chief of Detectives.

He held out his hands towards the gendarmes, and beckoned them to him with a movement of the head.

"Gentlemen," he said, "put on the thumbkins or the handcuffs. I take all present here to witness that I offer no resistance."

A murmur of admiration sounded throughout the room, extorted by the spectacle of this stream of fire and lava, but lately bursting forth, now drawn quietly back into the human furnace of this man's soul.

"Your game's crossed, this time, Master Smarty!" continued the convict, looking straight at the celebrated Director of Police.

"Come on, strip!" said the man from the Petite Rue Sainte-Anne, with contempt.

"Why so?" said Collin: "there are ladies present. Besides, I deny nothing, and I give myself up."

He paused for a moment, and looked round at his audience, like an orator who is about to say something that will surprise them.

"Take this down, Daddy Lachapelle," he said to a little, white-haired old man, who was now seated at the end of the table, ready to fill in the particulars of the arrest in the *Procès-verbal* (or printed form) which he had produced from a portfolio. "I confess to being Jacques Collin, nicknamed Trompe-la-Mort, who was condemned to twenty years' imprisonment; and I have just shown you that I have not stolen my nickname. If I had so much as raised a hand," he said, addressing the boarders, "those three skunks there would have spilt my claret on the domestic hearth of Mamma Vauquer. Yes, they had set their precious heads together to lay a trap for me!"

Madame Vauquer was quite overcome on hearing those words.

"Good heavens," she said to Sylvie, "it is enough to make one take to bed! To think that I was at the Gaîté with him last night!"

"You must call your philosophy to your aid, Mamma," retorted Collin. "Is it such a misfortune to have gone with me to the Gaîté last night and sat in my box?" he cried. "Are you any better than we are? The brand upon our shoulders is less shameful than the one that you wear in your hearts, you flabby fragments of a society gone rotten: the best man among you could not stand up to me." His eyes rested upon Rastignac, to whom he then said, with a kindly smile that was in strange contrast with the harsh expression which his features wore a moment earlier—"Our little bargain still holds good, dear boy, whenever you care to accept it! You understand?" and he sang the words:

"*A charming girl is my Fanchette*
In her simplicity."

"Don't give yourself any trouble about it," he continued; "I know how to collect my little accounts. They fear me too much to think of doing me, I can tell you!"

The convict's prison, with its customs and its language, its abrupt transitions from the jocular to the horrible, its frightful grandeur, its lack of dignity, and its awful depths, all seemed placed before the eyes of the company by the attitude and the discourse of this man. He seemed, indeed, a man no longer, but the type of a whole nation of degenerates, a people savage and logical, brutal and supple-minded. At that moment Collin became a poet of the Inferno, in whom

were reflected all the sentiments of the human heart save that of repentance. He wore the look of an archangel fallen, whose voice is for war to the end. Rastignac's eyes fell. He could not but accept, in expiation of his own evil thoughts, the cousinship in crime which Vautrin's words imputed to him.

"Who betrayed me?" said Collin, letting his terrible glance wander over the whole company. Then fixing it on Mademoiselle Michonneau:

"It was you," he said, "you old trollop! It was thanks to you, old Curiosity, that I had that fit of false apoplexy! . . . If I were to say but two words, I could have your throat cut within eight days. But I am a Christian, and I forgive you. Besides, you are not the one who sold me. Who was it, then?—Ha, ha! rummage away, up there," he cried, hearing the noise made by the officers of police, who were opening his cupboards and taking possession of his effects. "The nest is empty, the birds are flown, since yesterday. And you won't find anything out, either; I keep my Account Books *here*," he said, tapping his brow. "I know now who sold me. It must have been that scoundrel Fil-de-Soie. It was he, wasn't it, old Catch-'Em," he said to the Chief. "I know it was he; because the thing was planned to come off just when our bank-notes were making a short stay with me upstairs. But there's none there now, you miserable spies! As for that Fil-de-Soie, he will be under the ground within fifteen days, although you were to set the whole Gendarmerie to mount guard over him. How much did you give her, that Michonnette thing there?" he said to the officers. "A thousand crowns! Why, I was worth more than that, O you Ninon in dry-rot, you

Pompadour in tatters, you Venus of Père-Lachaise! If you had given me warning, you should have had six thousand francs. Ah! you had no idea of that, you old flesh-seller; else I should have had the first offer of your services. Yes, I would have given you that amount simply to avoid a journey which does not agree with me, and which will cause me to lose money," he said, while they were handcuffing him. "These good folk here are promising themselves the pleasure of dragging out my case for no end of a time, so that I shall be prevented from attending to my affairs. If they were to pack me off to prison at once I should be back at business in no time, in spite of all the little blockheads of the Quai des Orfevres. For *Down-there* they would, every one of them, clap their own souls in hell to let their General—their good Trompe-la-Mort—get clear away! Is there one among you who can say, as I can, that he has more than ten thousand brothers ready and willing to do anything in the world for him?" he asked with pride. "There is some good *there*," he said, striking his own heart: "I have never betrayed anyone in my life! —See here, you trollop, just look at them," he said, addressing the old maid. "They regard me with fear, but as for you—the sight of you makes their stomachs heave with disgust. Gather up your gains!"

He paused for a moment to contemplate the whole group of boarders.

"What a stupid lot you look, standing there! Have you never seen a convict in your lives before? A convict of the stamp of Collin, now speaking to you, is a man less craven than the rest, and who protests against the profound delusions of the Social Contract, as Jean-Jacques,

whose pupil I glory in being, has called it. In a word, I stand alone against Government, with its whole stock-in-trade of Law-Courts and Police and Budgets—and I spurn them."

"By Jove," said the painter, "what a splendid subject he would make!"

"Tell me, you Gentleman-in-Waiting to his Highness the Hangman, Master of Ceremonies to the Widow"—a name given by the convicts to the guillotine, with a grim poetry of its own. "Be a good sort," he continued, turning to the Chief of Police, "and tell me if it *was* Fil-de-Soie who sold me. I shouldn't like him to pay for somebody else's deed; it wouldn't be fair."

At this moment the officers, having opened and inventoried everything in his room, entered and spoke in a low tone to the Chief. The official minute of the arrest was now fully written out.

"Gentlemen," said Collin, addressing the boarders, "they are going to take me away now. You have all of you made my stay among you a very pleasant time to me, and I shall look back to it with kindly recollections. Accept, now, my adieux, and permit me to send you some figs from Provence."

He made a step or two forward, and then turned towards Eugène.

"Good-by, Eugène," he said, in a quiet and sad voice, that contrasted strangely with the harsh tones in which he had been talking hitherto. "Should you ever be in any trouble, I leave you a devoted friend."

Manacled as he was, he yet managed to throw himself into the posture of defence, gave the fencing-master's call, cried "One, two!" and lunged.

"If anything happens, apply there. Man and money, all is at your service."

These last words were enounced with such an air of burlesque that their meaning remained a secret to everybody, except Eugène and the strange man who uttered them. When the house was cleared of the gendarmes, soldiers, and detectives, then Sylvie, who was busy chafing her mistress's brows with vinegar, looked at the boarders in astonishment, and said:

"Well, he was a man, at any rate!"

This utterance broke the spell of fixed bewilderment which had settled upon them all, as the result of such strange enactments seen in that room, and such a diversity of strong emotions excited and yet repressed. The boarders looked at one another for a moment, and then all eyes were turned upon Mademoiselle Michonneau, who crouched beside the stove, a thin, shrivelled creature, cold as a mummy, keeping her head down as though she feared that her eye-shade might yet allow the guilt of her glance to be seen by the company. They had all felt an instinctive aversion to her face and figure, and the grounds of that feeling were now revealed at a stroke. A low murmur of reprobation and disgust sounded through the room, a murmur so single and concordant in all its tones, that it seemed to express the one common emotion of every mind there. Mademoiselle Michonneau heard that sound but did not move. The first to speak was Bianchon, who turned towards his neighbour, and said, half-aloud:

"If that thing is going to stay on and dine with us, I shall clear out."

In the twinkling of an eye everyone, except Poiret, made clear his approval of the medical

student's view. Strengthened by this general support, Bianchon now went forward to the older man.

"You are on terms," he said, "of special intimacy with Mademoiselle Michonneau. Speak to her, then; make her understand that she must leave here at once."

"At once!" repeated Poiret in amazement. Then he went and whispered some words to the old maid.

"But I have paid for the quarter!" she exclaimed. "I am here for my money, like everybody else," and she cast a venomous glance on the company.

"Don't let that stand in the way," said Rastignac. "We shall club together and refund your quarter's board."

"Monsieur is standing up for Collin," she retorted, giving the student a look at once malignant and questioning. "One can easily guess why."

At these words Eugène sprang forward, as though he would seize the old maid and strangle her. For he understood all the teeming treachery of that look, and the knowledge was like a horrible enlightenment of his soul.

"Leave her alone," cried the others.

Rastignac folded his arms and was silent.

"Let us have done with Mademoiselle Judas," said the painter, turning to Madame Vauquer. "If you do not turn the Michonneau to the door, Madame, we shall every one of us clear out of your shanty, and we shall let it be known everywhere that nobody lives here but convicts and police-spies. If, on the other hand, you pack her off, we shall sing dumb about the whole affair—which, when all is said, is a thing that

might happen in the very best society, so long as they don't brand their convicts on the forehead when they send them to the galleys, and so make it impossible for them to disguise themselves as decent Paris citizens, and *do* people in such a beastly way."

On hearing those words, Madame Vauquer recovered miraculously. She sat up and folded her arms; she opened her eyes very wide, and there was never the sign of a tear in them.

"Why, my dear sir, do you really wish to see my house ruined? There is M. Vautrin. . . . Oh, *Mon Dieu!*" she exclaimed, correcting herself—"I can't keep from calling him by the name which he had as a respectable man! Well," she went on, "there is ***his*** room empty, and you would like me to have two more to let at a time when everybody is already fixed up for lodgings. . . ."

"Gentlemen," interposed Bianchon, "let us put on our hats and go and dine at Flicoteaux's, in the Place Sorbonne!"

A single glance at her boarders enabled Madame Vauquer to estimate where the balance of advantage for herself lay. She waddled across to Mademoiselle Michonneau.

"Come now, my pretty dear, you would not like to ruin my house, would you? You see yourself how little allowance these gentlemen are making for me. Just go up to your room for this evening."

"No, no—nothing of the kind!" cried the boarders; "we want her out of the house; now, at once."

"But she has not dined, poor lady," said Poiret in a pitiful tone.

"She may go and dine where she likes," cried several voices.

"Out with her, the spy!"

"Out with them, the spies!"

"Gentlemen," cried Poiret, rising suddenly to the heights of courage to which love will elevate the male sheep, "respect a person of the weaker sex!"

"Spies are of no sex," answered the painter.

"A precious sexorama!"

"Into the streetorama!"

"Gentlemen, this is indecent. If you turn people out of the house, it ought to be done with some regard to form and ceremony. We have paid our board and we shall stay where we are." Thus speaking, Poiret clapped his cap on his head and seated himself on a chair beside Mademoiselle Michonneau, with whom Madame Vauquer was still expostulating.

"Naughty!" said the painter to Poiret, with a comic expression, "naughty little boy, go away!"

"Look here;" said Bianchon, "if you won't clear out of this, the rest of us will."

And the boarders moved toward the sitting-room like one man.

"Mademoiselle, what are you doing!" cried Madame Vauquer. "I am a ruined woman—you cannot stay here! They will end by doing something violent."

Mademoiselle Michonneau rose to her feet.

"She is going!—No, she won't!—She is going!—No, she won't!"

These alternate cries, and the drastic proposals for dealing with her that were beginning to pass from mouth to mouth, constrained Mademoiselle Michonneau into taking her departure—not,

however, without some stipulatory talk with her landlady, which was carried on in a low tone.

"I shall go to Madame Buneaud's," she then said, with a look that conveyed a threat.

"Go wherever you please, Mademoiselle," said Madame Vauquer, who felt the cruel insult implied in this selection of a house which was in opposition to her own, and which, consequently, was odious to her. "Go and stay with the Buneaud—you will have wine that would make a cat sick, and food bought at the rag-and-bone shop!"

The boarders arranged themselves in two rows to let Mademoiselle pass. Not a single word was spoken. Poiret looked so tenderly at Mademoiselle Michonneau, and was so manifestly and ingenuously at a loss to know whether he ought to follow her or to remain, that the boarders—now put in good humour by Mademoiselle Michonneau's withdrawal—burst into laughter at the sight of his perplexity.

"St! st! st! Poiret," cried the painter. "I say there, hullo! Hi, Poiret!"

The Museum official chanted in derisive tones the first lines of the well-known love-song:

"Partant pour la Syrie,
Le jeune et beau Dunois . . ."

"Do go—you know you are dying to go; *trahit sua quemque voluptas!*" said Bianchon.

"Everybody goes after His Own; a free translation from Virgil," said the tutor.

Mademoiselle Michonneau looked towards Poiret and made a movement as if to take his arm; an appeal which he could not resist, but stepped up at once and gave the old maid the support she craved. This action was greeted with

a ringing burst of applause, followed by explosive laughter.

"Bravo, Poiret!"—"Good for old Poiret!"—"Apollo Poiret!"—"Mars Poiret!"—"Poiret the Brave!"

At this moment a commissionaire entered and handed Madame Vauquer a letter. As soon as she read it she collapsed in her chair.

"All that remains is to burn my house to the ground: it is already struck by thunderbolts! Young Taillefer died at three o'clock—I am bitterly punished for having wished good fortune to these ladies to the detriment of that poor young man! Madame Couture and Victorine ask me to send their things, for they are going to live at home with her father. M. Taillefer is allowing his daughter to keep the widow Couture with her as lady's companion. Four rooms vacant, five boarders gone! . . ."

She sat upright and seemed on the point of bursting into tears.

"Misfortune has come to stay in my house," she cried.

Suddenly there was heard from the street a sound of carriage wheels, which stopped at the house.

"Another windfall for somebody!" said Sylvie.

Goriot appeared abruptly, his face beaming with animation, and so flushed with happiness that one might have thought he had grown young again.

"Goriot in a cab!" said the boarders. "The end of the world is at hand."

He went straight up to Eugène, who stood pondering deeply in a corner of the room, and laid his hand on the young man's arm.

"Come," he said, with a joyous air.

"Don't you know what has happened then?" said Eugène. "Vautrin was a convict, and they have just arrested him; and young Taillefer is dead."

"Well, what has that to do with us?" answered Père Goriot. "I am dining with my daughter, at your house—do you understand? She is waiting for you now. Come away!"

He pulled Rastignac so urgently by the arm that he fairly forced the young man to move, and appeared to carry him off as though it were a lover levanting with the lady of his choice.

"Let's have dinner," cried the painter; and they all drew their chairs to the table without more delay.

"Well, I never!" said fat Sylvie, "nothing but disasters this day—my haricot mutton has stuck to the pot! Bah, you will eat it all, burnt as it is, worse luck!"

When Madame Vauquer saw only ten persons seated around the table, instead of eighteen, her spirit quite forsook her, and she had not a word to say. They all did what they could to comfort her and brighten her up as the meal went on. If the external boarders talked at first exclusively of Vautrin and the events of the day, in no great time they surrendered themselves to the serpentine lead which their conversation gave to their minds, and fell to talking of duels and convict life—and the administration of justice, and the need of a revision of the laws—and prisons, and such other subjects; until in the end they had travelled a thousand leagues away from Jacques Collin and Victorine and her brother. Though there were only ten of them, they made noise enough for twenty. They seemed, indeed, a larger company than usual; and this made all

the difference there was between that day's dinner and the dinner of the day before. The indifference to the fate of others, which is a constant habit of those who live the self-regarding life of the boarding-house world—and which was sure to find on the morrow a fresh subject to feed upon from among the many daily tragedies of Paris—soon resumed the ascendancy; and in the end even Madame Vauquer permitted herself to be calmed by the ministrations of Hope, which spoke through the voice of fat Sylvie.

The phantasmagory of that day's events had cast upon Eugène's mind a dream-like spell which was to continue, it seemed, till nightfall. As he sat now in the cab beside Père Goriot, neither his force of character nor his normal clear-headedness availed to bring any order into the chaos of his thought and reverie; and all the eager talk of the old man, who seemed brimming over with some unwonted happiness, sounded in his ears, after the many emotions of that day, like voices dimly heard in a dream.

"Everything was completed by this evening. We three shall dine together—together, do you hear? It is four years since I dined with my Delphine, my little Delphine, and now I am going to have her to myself for a whole evening. We have been at your place the whole of the day. I have worked like a porter, in my shirt sleeves, helping to carry in the furniture. Aha! you have no idea how nice she is at table—you will see how she'll be attending to me all the time: 'Do take some of this, Papa; it is so nice!' Then I shan't be able to eat anything. Oh, it is long, long since I was so much at ease with her as we shall be in our meetings now!"

"Is the world, then, turned upside down?" exclaimed Eugène.

"Upside down?" said Père Goriot. "Why, the world was never so right before. I see nothing but smiling faces in the streets, and people who grasp each other warmly by the hand and embrace each other: people so happy that you would think every one of them was on the way to dine with his daughter, and there gobble up a little dinner like the one she went with me to order this day from the chef of the Café des Anglais. But bah! with her by your side, a sour crab-apple would taste as sweet as honey!"

"I feel as if I were only regaining consciousness after a swoon," said Eugène.

"Now, hurry up, there!" cried Père Goriot, letting down the window in front. "Get along faster, cabby—I shall give you five francs extra if you bring us to the place you know within the next ten minutes."

On hearing those words, cabby drove across Paris like lightning.

"How that man crawls!" said Père Goriot.

"But where are you taking me to?" asked Eugène.

"To your own house," said Père Goriot.

The cab drew up in the Rue d'Artois. Père Goriot got out first and tossed ten francs to the cabman with the prodigality of a happy widower who, in the first paroxysm of recovered freedom, counts the cost of nothing.

"Now, come along upstairs," he said. He took Rastignac across a courtyard and then they ascended, stopping before the door of a suite of rooms on the third floor, looking from the back of a newly-built and handsome edifice. Before Père Goriot had time to ring, the door was opened

to them by Madame de Nucingen's maid Thérèse. On entering, Eugène found himself in a charming "bachelor's suite," consisting of an ante-room, a small drawing-room, a bedroom, and a study looking out upon a garden. The furnishings and decoration of the little drawing-room were as prettily and as daintily imagined as anything you could find to compare them with. In the soft candle-light which filled the room he saw Delphine seated upon an ottoman by the side of the fire. She rose as he entered, placed her hand-screen on the mantelpiece, and said in a voice charged with tenderness in every tone:

"So we have had to come and seek you out, you sir, who understand nothing!"

Thérèse left the room. The student took Delphine in his arms and clasped her tightly, his eyes filling with tears of joy. The culminating contrast between what he now saw and what he had seen in the course of a day which had almost worn out his heart and brain with a succession of excitements, produced in Eugène a sudden access of sensibility, of nervous surrender to his emotions.

"I was quite sure that he loved you," said Père Goriot in a low voice to his daughter. Eugène had sank on the ottoman, quite overcome and speechless, and unable to reason out or guess by what means the magic wand had been waved to such purpose as this.

"But come and see your rooms," said Madame de Nucingen. She took his hand and led him into a room, of which the furniture, the carpet, and every smallest detail, formed, as he at once recognised, a reproduction in miniature of Delphine's own apartment.

"There is no bed," said Rastignac.

"No, sir," she said, blushing, and pressing his hand. Eugène gazed on her, and recognised, young as he was, how much true modesty is at home in the heart of a woman who loves.

"You are one of those beings whom a man must needs adore forever," he said in her ear. "Yes, I will say it, now that we know each other so well—the more love is intense and sincere, the more should it be screened by veils and mystery. Nobody shall know our secret."

"Oh, then I suppose I am nobody, am I?" said Père Goriot, with a growl.

"You know quite well that 'we' means you also, and. . ."

"Ah, that is what I wanted! You won't pay any attention to me, will you? I shall just go and come, like a spirit who moves about everywhere, and who is known to be there, whether you see him or not. Well, now, Delphinette, Ninette, Dedel, wasn't I right when I said, 'There's a nice suite of rooms in the Rue d'Artois; let us furnish them for him? And you would not agree to it. Ah, so it is I that am the author of your happiness now, even as I was the author of your being. Fathers should always be giving, that they may know what it is to be happy. To give and give—what is being a father, but that!"

"I do not understand," said Eugène.

"Yes, she did not care to do it. She was afraid of people's silly talk, as if people's remarks about you were worth weighing against your own happiness. Why, it is the dream of every woman, to do what she is doing. . ."

Père Goriot was addressing an absent audience; for Madame de Nucingen had led Rastignac into the study, whence the sound of a

kiss, albeit the kiss was softly given and taken, came audibly enough. This room was in keeping with the elegance of the whole suite, which, indeed, was perfection in every way.

"Have we divined your wishes happily?" she asked, as they returned to the drawing-room for dinner.

"Yes," he answered; "only too well. Alas, all this luxury, so full and finished, this realisation of one's fondest dreams, this elegance which is like the breath of poetry upon a young life—I have too quick an apprehension of them all to be unfit to enjoy them. But I cannot take them as a gift from you, and I am still too poor to. . ."

"Ah, what—you say me nay already!" she answered, with a little make-believe air of command; then she pouted prettily in the way that women use, for when they wish to obviate a scruple they begin by affecting to smile at it.

But Eugène had questioned his own soul too long and deeply during that day, and the arrest of Vautrin—revealing to him in a moment, as it did, the depths of the gulf into which he had all but fallen—had too lately come to the rescue of his better sentiments of delicacy and honour, for him to surrender now to this seductive denial of his nobler thoughts. A profound melancholy took possession of him.

"What!" said Madame de Nucingen, "are you going to refuse? And do you know what a refusal means in such a case? It means that you distrust the future, that you do not dare to bind yourself to me. Are you afraid, then, that you will betray my affection for you? If you love me, and if I. . . love you, why should you recoil from so trifling an obligation? If you knew what a pleasure it has been to me to busy

myself in the preparation of these chambers, you would hesitate no more, but would ask me to forgive you. I had money of yours, and I spent it to good use; that is all. You think that you are behaving greatly, but you are behaving in a small manner. For you want a great deal more than this. . ." ("Ah!" she cried inwardly, as she caught one swift glance of passion which he turned upon her) "and yet you affect scruples about accepting such small favours. If you do not really care for me at all—oh! then, by all means, accept nothing. My fate hangs on a single word. Speak!—Father," she said, after a pause, turning to Père Goriot, "reason with him, you; show him how it is. Surely he does not think that I am less sensitive, less careful of our honour, than he is!"

Père Goriot stood listening to this pretty quarrel, and looked on with an untroubled smile, as though conscious of possessing the true theriac salve, the antidote to all such angers.

"You child!" she continued, taking Eugène by the hand. "You stand at the doorway of life; and your passage is barred by obstacles which many another man finds insurmountable. A woman's hand opens the way for you, and you shrink back! But I tell you, you will succeed. You will have a brilliant career; success is written broad on that brow of yours. Well, won't you be able to repay me *then* for what I lend you to-day? Did not the noble ladies in old times furnish their cavaliers with all their armour—their swords and helmets—their horses and their coats of mail—that they might go and fight, each in his own lady's name, in the tournaments of those times? Well, Eugène, the things I am offering you are the arms, the sword and

shield of this age, the equipment which nobody can do without who means to be anything in the world. You live in a garret now; and a pretty place it must be, if it is at all like Papa's room. Come, then, and let us sit down to dinner! You don't wish to make me miserable, do you? Why don't you answer?" she said, shaking his hand to and fro. *Mon Dieu*, Papa! do you make up his mind for him, or I shall go away, and shall never look on him again!"

"I shall make up your mind for you," said Père Goriot, issuing from his beatified trance. "What you've got to do, my dear Eugène, is to borrow the money from the Jews. Isn't that so?"

"Yes, that is so, indeed," he answered.

"Good, I take you at that!" said the old man, producing a leathern pocket-book, sadly the worse for wear. "I have turned Jew myself, and have paid all the bills; here they are. You don't owe a centime for anything in the house. The whole thing does not come to much; five thousand francs at the outside, and *I* shall lend you the money! I am not a woman, so you can't refuse to accept from me. Just write me an acknowledgment on a scrap of paper, and you can repay later on."

Tears gathered at the same instant in the eyes of Eugène and of Delphine. The two looked at each other in surprise, and Rastignac put forth his hand and grasped that of the old man, tightly.

"Well, well, what now? Aren't you both my children?" said Goriot.

"Oh, my poor father," said Madame de Nucingen, "what have you done?"

"Ah, now we're coming at it!" he replied. "When I had got you to make up your mind to

have Eugène lodged near you, and when I saw how you went buying things fit for a bride's home, then I said to myself, 'she will land herself in difficulties presently.' The attorney tells me that the action now pending against your husband, to make him give you back your own fortune, will last for six months yet. Very good! I have an income from the funds of thirteen hundred and fifty livres. This I sold, and then bought for fifteen thousand francs a safe life-annuity of twelve hundred; and with the remainder of the capital, my children, I discharged your tradesmen's accounts. For myself, I have a room upstairs which only costs me fifty crowns a-year, and on forty sous a-day I can live like a prince, and still have something over. I don't wear anything out, so I shall have to spend almost nothing on clothes. So, for the last fifteen days I have been laughing in my sleeve as I said to myself, '*Won't they be happy!*' Very well, and you are happy, aren't you?"

"Oh, papa! papa!" exclaimed Madame de Nucingen, springing towards her father, who took her on his knee. She covered him with kisses, caressed his cheeks with her blonde locks and wetted with her own tears that aged face, now so bright, so radiant with happiness.

"Dear father, you are indeed a father! No, there are not two such fathers as you under heaven. Eugène loved you already, but what will he do now!"

"Oh, my children," said Père Goriot, who had not felt his daughter's heart beat close to his own for ten years past till now—"Oh, Delphinette, you will make me die of joy! My heart is like to break. Ah, Monsieur Eugène, the debt is paid already!"

And the old man clasped his daughter to his heart with so wild and passionate an embrace that she exclaimed:

"Oh, father, you hurt me!"

"I am hurting you?" he said. He turned pale at the words, and gazed at her with an expression of sorrow that seemed to transcend the limits of human emotion. To portray rightly the face of that Christ of Paternity as he then seemed, one would have to borrow terms and comparisons from the pictures in which the princes of colour have sought to realise their dreams of the Agony which the Saviour of men endured for the rescue of whole worlds. Père Goriot pressed a kiss very gently against the waist which his hands had grasped too tightly.

"No, no, I have not hurt you, have I?" he said with a smile, a smile that craved reassurance. "It is you who hurt me just now, with that cry." Then he added in a whisper, kissing her very carefully, "The things came to more than that; but I had to deceive him, else he would have been angry about it."

Eugène was rendered powerless by the sight of this man's inexhaustible devotion. He gazed at him awhile in silence, with that unconcealed admiration which is an act of faith of young hearts.

"I shall be worthy of all this!" he cried.

"Oh, my Eugène, that is nobly said of you," said Madame de Nucingen, kissing the student on the forehead.

"He has refused Mademoiselle Taillefer and her millions, for your sake," said Père Goriot. "Yes, she loved you, that little girl. And her brother is dead; so there she is now, as rich as Crœsus."

"Oh, why speak of that?" exclaimed Rastignac.

"Eugène," said Delphine in his ear, "I have one regret now, this night. Ah! I shall love truly, indeed; and for ever!"

"This has been the happiest day I have known since your marriage!" cried Père Goriot. "God may make me suffer now as much as He likes—if only it is not sorrow on your account—for I shall still say, 'In February of this year I had more happiness in one moment than other men can know in their whole lifetime.' Look at me, Fifine!" he said to his daughter—"She is very beautiful, is she not? Just tell me, how many women have you met with such pretty colours as those, or a little dimple like that? Not one, have you? Well, it was I who made this dear of a woman. And now she will become a thousand times more beautiful, for the happiness that you will give her. My friend," he said, "if you have any need of my corner in Heaven, you shall have it—I shall resign it to you and go down to Hell instead. Let us eat, let us eat," he continued, no longer knowing what he said "All the world is ours."

"Poor father!"

"If you knew, my child," he said, rising and going over to her, and taking her head in his hands and kissing it in the midst of its plaited abundance—"if you knew how happy you can make me by so little, at such small cost! Come and see me sometimes, I shall be upstairs, up there—you will only have to walk a step. Promise me that, do!"

"Yes, dear father."

"Say it again."

"Yes, my kind father."

"Hush; I would have you to say it a hundred times if I listened to my own heart!"

The rest of the evening was spent in childish playfulness, and Père Goriot was not less a madcap than the younger companions. He lay down to kiss his daughter's feet, he gazed into her eyes long and fondly, he rubbed his head against her dress—he did, in fact, all the foolish things that the youngest and fondest lover would have done.

"You see," said Delphine to Eugène, "that when father is with us, he claims me entirely for himself. I am afraid he will be rather in the way sometimes."

Eugène, who had already had some momentary twinges of a kind of jealousy, could not bring himself to reprove this speech, which contained the active principle of every ingratitude.

"And when will the place be finished?" asked Eugène, looking round the room. "I suppose we must leave it to-night."

"Yes; but you must come and dine with me to-morrow," she said, with an arch look. "To-morrow is one of our nights at the Italiens."

"I shall go to the pit," said Père Goriot.

It was now midnight, and Madame de Nucingen's carriage was waiting. Père Goriot and Eugène walked home to the Maison Vauquer together, and entertained each other on the way with talk about Delphine. The longer they talked, the more high-pitched grew their enthusiasms, till all their expressions of praise passed into the service of a curious rivalry between those two strong passions. Eugène could not but see that the father's love, unflecked by a single selfish aim, crushed his own into littleness on a comparison whether of depth or persistency. To the father, the object of his worship was always

beautiful and always pure, and his love of her gathered sustenance from all the past as well as strength from the hopes of the future.

When they arrived, they found Madame Vauquer seated near the stove, alone, save for the company of Sylvie and Christophe on either hand. The old landlady sat there like Marius among the ruins of Carthage. She was waiting for the only two boarders who remained to her now, and was moaning her fate meanwhile in talk with Sylvie. Beautifully worded, no doubt, are the lamentations which Lord Byron has placed in the mouth of Tasso in his poem, but they are very far indeed from having the profundity and truth of those words of woe that broke now from the lips of Madame Vauquer.

"Only three cups of coffee to make to-morrow morning, Sylvie! Is it not enough to break any heart, to see one's house made a desert in this way? Life—what is life to me when all my boarders are gone? Nothing at all. Here is my house disfurnished, stripped of inhabitants; but your furniture is your life. What have I done against Heaven to draw down on me all these disasters? And we have laid in haricots and potatoes for twenty boarders. And then, the police in my house! Well, we shall have to live on nothing but boiled potatoes, that's all! And I shall have to send Christophe away."

The Savoyard was asleep, but he started awake and said, "Yes, madame?"

"Poor fellow," said Sylvie, "he is just like a dog."

"In the middle of the dead season, too, when nobody is looking for rooms. Where do you suppose I am to find boarders—are they to drop

from the sky? Oh, it will drive me mad. And that old witch of a Michonneau, too, to go and carry off Poiret! Whatever can she have done to fasten that man to her—he follows her like a little dog!"

"Ah, good Lord!" said Sylvie, with a significant shake of the head, "those old maids are up to all the tricks."

"And that poor M. Vautrin, whom they make out to be a convict," continued the widow—"Well, Sylvie, it is too much for me, and I don't believe it even now. So merry a man as that, and one who did not grudge fifteen francs a month for his *gloria** after dinner, and who paid up every penny, too, regularly!"

"And so generous!" said Christophe.

"There must be some mistake," said Sylvie.

"No, no, there isn't; he said so himself," retorted Madame Vauquer. "And to think that all this has happened to me, in a quarter of the town where not even a cat goes by! As true as I am an honest woman, it is a dream! For, you see, we saw how Louis XVI. had his misfortune; and we saw the Emperor fall; and then we saw him come back, and fall again. All that, I say, was in the course of things and possible enough; but there are no risks to be run by family boarding-houses. One may do without a king, but one must always eat, whatever happens. So, when a respectable woman, *née* De Conflans, offers you a dinner table furnished with everything that is good, why, unless the end of the world should come—but there! that is what it is: the end of the world!"

"And to think that Mademoiselle Michonneau,

* Coffee with a reinforcement of brandy.

who has done you all this injury, is going to get, as they say, a thousand crowns a-year!" cried Sylvie.

"Don't mention her name to me—she is a base, bad woman!" said Madame Vauquer. "And she has gone to live at Buneaud's, where she will board below cost price. But she is capable of anything; I have no doubt she has done the most frightful things, and has murdered and robbed people in her time. *She* ought to be sent to prison, instead of that poor dear man. . . ."

At that moment, Eugène and Père Goriot rang the door-bell.

"Ah, here are my two faithful ones," said the widow, drawing a long breath.

The two faithful ones, having very slight recollections now of the disasters that had fallen on the Maison Vauquer in the course of that day, informed their landlady without preamble that they were going to take up their abode in the Chaussée-d'Antin.

"Sylvie," said the widow, "there is my last hope gone!—Ah, gentlemen, you have dealt me my death-blow! This has given my inside a turn—the iron has entered my soul! This day has added ten years to my age. On my word of honour, I shall go mad! What are we to do with these haricots?—Ah well, if I am to be left all alone in this house, you will have to leave to-morrow, Christophe. Adieu, gentlemen—good-night."

"What is the matter with her?" said Eugène to Sylvie.

"Why, good Lord! Everybody has gone and left the house, owing to things that have happened. It has turned her head. There! I can hear her crying now. It will do her good to

snivel a bit. It's the first time she has wetted an eye since I've been in her service."

In the morning Madame Vauquer had, in her own phrase, "found her reason." She wore, indeed, the afflicted look of a woman who has lost all her boarders, and whose life has suffered the shock of a complete overthrow and reversal. But she had still her intelligence at command, and the grief which she betrayed was a grief genuine and profound, the grief which is caused by damaged interests, by the rude breaking of a settled habit of existence. The glance that a departing lover casts upon the home in which his mistress dwells was never more sorrowful, in good truth, than that with which Madame Vauquer gazed upon the empty spaces around her table. Eugène did what he could to comfort her. He pointed out that Bianchon, whose term of residence at the Hospital would be over in a few days, would no doubt want to take the room which *he* was vacating: that the Museum official had frequently made known his desire to have Madame Couture's rooms: and that finally, before many days had passed, she would have made up the number of her household once more.

"Heaven grant you may be right, my dear sir! But ill-luck has entered this house. Before ten days are out, you will see, death will follow." She cast a funereal look round the dining-room. "Who will be taken, I wonder?" she said.

"It was about time to leave!" said Eugène in a low voice to Père Goriot.

"Madame," said Sylvie, hastening in with a scared look. "I have not seen Mistigris for three days."

"Ah! well, if my *cat* is dead, if *he* has gone and left us, I. . . ."

The poor widow did not finish the sentence. Clasping her hands, she turned and buried her face in the back of her chair, utterly overwhelmed by this portentous omen.

Towards mid-day, the hour when the postman appears in the neighbourhood of the Panthéon, Eugène received a letter. On opening the dainty envelope, which was stamped with the Beauséant crest, he found an invitation card—filled in with the names of M. and Madame de Nucingen—for that grand ball at the Vicomtesse's, which had been a topic for a month past. Along with this, there was a little note for himself:

"It has occurred to me, Monsieur, that you would have pleasure in making yourself the interpreter of my sentiments to Madame de Nucingen. So I am sending you the card which you asked for, and shall be delighted to make the acquaintance of Madame de Restaud's sister. Please, then, introduce that charming lady to me, and also contrive, if you can, that she shall not have *all* your affection, since you owe me a great deal of it in return for that which I send you.

"Vicomtesse de Beauséant."

"Well, said Eugène to himself, as he re-read this note. "Madame de Beauséant has told me pretty plainly that she doesn't want to know the Baron de Nucingen."

He went off at once to Delphine, full of delight at having procured her a gratification for which, no doubt, he would have his reward. Madame de Nucingen was dressing. Rastignac waited in the boudoir, a prey to all the impatience which naturally fretted the soul of a young man enamoured and now eager to take full possession of

a mistress who had been the object of a year's desires. There are emotions, and this is one, which can only be experienced once in a lifetime, and in youth. The first woman to whom a man is drawn, if she is really a woman—if, that is, she appears to him amid that splendour of social condition, and that atmosphere of material refinements which Parisian society insists upon as essentials of life---this one woman can never have a rival. For love in Paris is altogether different from love as it is known in other parts of the world. In Paris neither men nor women are the dupes of the handsome commonplaces with which people seek at once to deck and conceal their real motives, in places where respect for decency prescribes an affectation of disinterested love. In this country within a country, a woman knows quite well that she is expected not only to satisfy the senses and the soul, but is under a still deeper obligation to discharge her duty towards the thousand and one vanities which social life consists of. There Love is, above all things and essentially, in its nature vaunting, unashamed, ostentatious, spendthrift, and a charlatan withal. If every woman at the Court of Louis XIV. envied Mademoiselle la Vallière that reckless and commanding devotion which caused this great Prince to forget that the ruffles at his wrists cost a thousand crowns a-piece, so that he tore them off in order to help the entry of the Duc de Vermandois into this world, what can we expect from the rest of humanity? You have need to be young and rich, and to have a titled name; nay, you should have more than that, if you can come by it; for the more incense you bring to burn before your idol, the more favourably will your prayers be received, always supposing you have

found your idol. Love is a religion, and its ritual is necessarily more costly than those of all other cults: the Love-God comes suddenly and passes on, like the street urchin whose line of passage can be traced by the destruction he has wrought. The wealth of noble feeling and imagination about love is the poetry of the garret, it is true. But without that wealth, how could love exist *there* at all?

There may be some, indeed, who set themselves above those Draconian laws of the Parisian code. But they are solitary exceptions, sequestered souls who refuse to yield to the pull exerted upon them by the theories of life prevalent in their own time, and who are content to linger beside some well-head of pure waters, that pass fleetly but are forever flowing. They are faithful to the green shaded places of their soul's youth, and are happy in overhearing the voices of the infinite that speak to them in everything, and are heard within their own hearts—beings who look with pity on the doings of the earth while they wait patiently for the wings that shall carry them away.

Rastignac, however, like the majority of young men who have had a foretaste of all that is implied in power and wealth, was minded to enter fully armed into the tournament of the world. The desire of conquest was already hot in his veins; yet, although he scarce doubted his own power to conquer, he had no exact prevision either of the means or the end of this ambition. In the absence of such a pure and sacred love as may fill a life entirely, this thirst for power is capable of becoming a very noble thing; for under its influence every personal interest may be shed like a slough, and the exaltation of a

country become the object of a life. But the student had not yet reached the age at which it becomes possible for a man to take a survey of Life as a whole, and to judge what issues it has for him. He had not even, until now, completely freed himself from the spell of the fresh and gracious prepossessions which are like a green frondage enshrining childhood and early youth in provincial France. He had hesitated again and again to cross the Rubicon of Paris. In spite of the questing spirit which urged him forward, he had still harboured some lingering fondness for the idea of a nobleman's happy life in his own château. But his last scruples had disappeared on the previous evening, when he found himself standing in his new abode. He had then apprehended, and so came to value, the material advantages of fortune, even as he had long enjoyed the social advantages which are given by good birth. From that hour he cast his slough, and was a provincial no longer, but quietly accepted his place amid surroundings from which he saw that access to a fine future would be possible for him. So, as he waited now for Delphine, comfortably ensconced in this pretty boudoir—which seemed, in a sense, to belong to him also, now—the Rastignac who had come to Paris a year ago appeared to stand in so remote a distance that he looked at that figure through a kind of moral telescope, and asked whether there was any resemblance between it and the Rastignac of the present hour.

"Madame is in her room," Thérèse came to tell him. A thrill passed through him as he heard the voice.

He found Delphine lying back on her ottoman by the fireside, looking fresh and rested.

Reclining there amid the waves of her muslin drapery, she was like one of those beautiful Indian plants in which the fruit appears in the heart of the blossom.

"Well, here you are," she said, with a tremor in her voice.

"Guess what I have brought you!" said Eugène. He seated himself beside her, and drew her arm towards him to kiss her hand.

Madame de Nucingen gave a start of delight when she read the invitation. With tearful eyes she turned to Eugène, and threw her arms around his neck to draw him to her in a transport of gratified vanity.

"And it is to you (*à toi*," she whispered in his ear; adding, "But Thérèse is in my dressing-room—we must be careful!) to you that I owe this happiness? Yes, I will call it happiness; for since it is you who have obtained it for me, it is something more than a triumph for one's vanity, is it not? There was nobody who would introduce me into that circle. Perhaps at this moment I seem to you to be small and frivolous and slight-minded, like any other Parisienne; but remember, *mon ami*, that I am prepared to sacrifice everything for you, and that if I desire more ardently than ever to enter the Faubourg Saint-Germain, it is because you are of that world, and I shall meet you there!"

"Don't you think," said Eugène, "that Madame de Beauséant seems to be letting us understand that she does not count upon seeing the Baron de Nucingen at her ball?"

"Yes," said the Baronne, handing the letter back to Eugène. "These women have a genius for impertinence. But never mind, I shall go! My sister is sure to be there, and I know that

she means to come most beautifully dressed. Eugène," she continued, in a low voice, "she is going there in order to dispel the most horrible suspicions. You have no idea what things are being said about her. Nucingen came and told me only this morning that men were talking of her at his club last night in the freest way. *Mon Dieu!* on what does the reputation and honour of women and of whole families depend! I feel that I am myself attacked, I am myself wounded, in my poor sister. According to certain people, M. de Trailles has signed bills of exchange to the amount of a hundred thousand francs; nearly all of them are overdue, and proceedings were going to be taken against him. In this extremity, they say, my sister sold her diamonds to a Jew—the beautiful diamonds that you have seen her wear, which had belonged to M. de Restaud's mother. In a word, people have talked of nothing else for the past two days. So I have an idea that Anastasie will come to Madame de Beauséant's ball in a coruscating robe, and in the full brilliance of all her diamonds, to ensure that she shall be the centre of attention. But I do not mean to be second to her. She has tried to crush me into insignificance all her life; she has *never* been nice to me, although I have done her many kindnesses, and have always had money for her when she has had none. But let's not talk of other people; to-day I mean to be perfectly happy."

Rastignac was still with Madame de Nucingen at one o'clock in the morning. Amid the long leave-taking of lovers, in the midst of adieux that were charged with feeling of the joys to come, she said to him with an air of sadness:—

"I am so full of fears, so superstitious—call my

forebodings what you please—that I tremble at the thought that my happiness will be paid for by some horrible catastrophe."

"You child!" said Eugène.

"Ah, it is I who am the child to-night," she said with a smile.

Eugène made his way back to the Maison Vauquer, fully assured that he would leave it for good on the morrow. And as he went along he indulged in all those fine dreams which fill the hearts of young men on whose lips the taste of happiness is still fresh.

"Well?" said Père Goriot, as Rastignac passed his door.

"Yes," answered Eugène. "I shall tell you everything to-morrow."

"Everything, won't you?" cried the old man, eagerly. "Go to bed, now. To-morrow we shall begin our happy life."

Next morning Goriot and Rastignac were only awaiting the good pleasure of a porter to take their departure from the boarding-house, when towards twelve o'clock the Rue Neuve-Saint-Genevieve was awakened by the sound of an equipage which pulled up before the door of the Maison Vauquer. Madame de Nucingen stepped from her carriage, and asked if her father was still in the house; and on getting a reply in the affirmative from Sylvie, she ran lightly upstairs. It happened that Eugène was then in his own room, unknown to his neighbour. At breakfast he had asked Père Goriot to see to the removal of his effects, and had told him that they would meet in the Rue d'Artois at four o'clock. But it also happened that Eugène's name had been called early at the École de Droit that day, so that he had returned to the house while Goriot

was gone in search of porters, and ascended to his room unobserved. His only object in returning had been to settle accounts with Madame Vauquer, and not leave Goriot a chance of doing this for him—which, he was quite aware, the old man's infatuation would impel him to do. Finding that the landlady was out, he went up to his own room, just to see that he had forgotten nothing. As it was, he had reason to congratulate himself on having thought of this; for he discovered the blank acceptance bearing Vautrin's signature in the drawer of his table, where he had carelessly thrown it on the day when he repaid the loan. As there was no fire in the room, he was about to tear the paper into small fragments, when he suddenly heard the sound of Delphine's voice. Believing that she could not have any secrets that she would wish to keep from him, he stopped to listen, and was careful to make no noise. But when the first few words had been spoken, he found the conversation between the father and daughter so strangely interesting that he could not choose but listen to the whole of it.

"Oh, father!" she said, "thank heaven you thought of asking him to give an account of my fortune in time to keep me from being ruined! May I speak?"

"Yes, the house is empty," said Père Goriot, in a changed voice.

"What is the matter, father?" asked Madame de Nucingen.

"God pardon you, my child," answered the old man, "but you have struck me over the head with an axe! You do not know how I love you; if you knew, you would not say things like that so suddenly to me, especially if there is any room

for hope. What can have occurred of such urgency that you must come to seek me here when a few minutes later should find us at the Rue d'Artois?"

"What, father! is one able to control one's first movement when a catastrophe occurs? I am out of my senses, I know. Your attorney has discovered—a little earlier, only, than we might have done—the disaster which was bound to burst upon our knowledge later. We shall have need of your long business experience, and I have hastened to find you, just as one who is drowning will clutch at a branch for safety. When M. Derville saw that Nucingen was putting all sorts of tricky difficulties in his way, he threatened to open proceedings against him, and told him that an order from the President of the Tribunal could be very quickly obtained in a case like this. Then Nucingen came to me this morning, and asked if I wished to ruin both him and myself. I answered that I knew nothing at all about that; but that I had a fortune of my own, and that I ought to be put in possession of my fortune; and that the whole matter in dispute was in the hands of my attorney; and that I was myself entirely ignorant, and entirely incapable of going into this matter with him. That is what you advised me to say, isn't it?"

"Quite right," answered Père Goriot.

"Well," continued Delphine, "he then told me all about the state of his affairs. He has invested the whole of his own capital and mine in certain enterprises that have scarcely begun yet, but into which he has had to put very large sums of money at once. If I compelled him to refund my dowry now, he would be forced to file his petition of bankruptcy. If, on the other hand,

I will consent to wait a year, he binds himself, on his honour, to restore to me my fortune, doubled or trebled, as the result of his operations with my capital in building-land investments. I am then to become sole mistress of my property, when these transactions have been achieved. My dear father, he was in earnest, he quite frightened me. He craved my pardon for his behaviour; he has given me complete liberty, and allows me to act according to my own liking: on condition that I leave him full power to conduct affairs in my name. To prove his good faith he promised that he would call in M. Derville as often as I liked, so that my attorney might judge whether the instruments in virtue of which I am invested with proprietary rights are all authentically drawn. In a word, he placed himself in my power, bound hand and foot. He asks me to permit him to run the house for the next two years, and begged me not to spend on myself a penny more than he allows me. He proved to me that it was as much as he could do to preserve appearances—that he has sent away his dancing girl—and that in order to hold out, and keep his credit unshaken till these investments mature, he will have to practise a most stringent, though a carefully concealed, economy of expenditure. I bullied him, I professed to doubt every word of his story, in order to reduce him to extremities, so that I might learn more. Then he showed me his books, and at last he wept. I never saw a man in such a state; his wits seemed to leave him, and he talked of killing himself, and raved till I was quite sorry for him."

"And you put faith in that kind of twaddle?" cried Père Goriot. "The man is playing a

part! I have met Germans in the way of business in my time, and for the most part they are men of good faith, simple and straightforward. But when with their air of candour and seeming simplicity they are at bottom minded to be nothing but cheats and rascals, then they are the very worst specimens of that sort. Your husband is taking advantage of you, and now that he feels himself rather closely pressed, he starts shamming Abraham. *He* knows that acting in your name will leave him more master of the situation than when he acted in his own, and he means to use this fact to keep him safe against the risks of business. He is a bad lot, as cunning as he is treacherous. No, no! I am not going to go to Père-Lachaise, leaving my daughters without a penny in the world. I still know a little about business matters. He has locked up all his money in speculations, has he? Very well! his interest in these speculations is represented by equivalents—securities, receipts, agreements. Let him produce these and make an arrangement with you in *that* way. We shall select some of the soundest of his investments, and shall take all the business risks on ourselves—we'll have the ratifications of liability duly made out in your own name as Delphine Goriot, wife of the Baron de Nucingen, in separate possession of her own estate. Why, does the fellow think that we are imbeciles? Does he fancy that I would endure for two days the possibility of leaving you without fortune in the world, without bread to eat? I would not endure it for a day, not for a night, not for two hours! If I thought that the possibility were come true, I should not survive the discovery of it. What! to think that I should have laboured during forty years, that I should

have carried loaded sacks on my back, that I should have rained the sweat of toil, and should have deprived myself all my life through for your sakes, my darlings—you, who repay me for all my labour, and make every burden light for me—and then to think that *now* my fortune, my whole life, should pass away like smoke! I tell you, I should die raving mad if it were true. But, by everything that is holy in Heaven and Earth, we shall drag all this matter into the light—we shall go through the books—shall examine the banking account—shall verify the truth of every one of these investments! I shall not sleep, I shall not lie down, I shall not eat bread till it is proved to me that your whole fortune is untouched and to the good. Thank Heaven, you had a separate settlement; and M. Derville, who is, fortunately, an honest man, shall act as your attorney. Praise the Lord, you shall yet have your nice little million safe and sound, and your fifty thousand livres a-year as long as you live, or I shall make the streets of Paris ring with it. If the Tribunals don't give us fair play, I shall appeal to the Chambers. Oh, if I only knew that your mind was at ease and happy in regard to your money, why, the thought would soothe every other sorrow, and make my own illnesses seem light to me. Money—it is life itself. Money makes everything. What sort of nonsense is he trying to pass off on us, that lump of an Alsatian? Delphine, don't you make any concession—not the fourth part of a farthing—to this great beast who has kept you in chains and misery. If he needs your aid, we shall lace him up pretty tightly and make him march straight forward. *Mon Dieu!* my brain is on fire, there is something that burns within my head. My

Delphine lying on straw! Oh, my Fifine, you! *Sapristi!* where are my gloves? Come, let us go. I am going to see into everything this very instant—the books, the cash, the correspondence, and the whole round of affairs. I shall not be at peace until he has shown to my satisfaction that your fortune has been placed beyond the reach of risk, and until I have seen with my own eyes that it is safe."

"My dear father, you must move prudently in this matter! If you are influenced in the slightest degree by motives of revenge, or show yourself too openly hostile, I shall be ruined. He knows the kind of man you are, and he thinks it natural enough that you should have prompted me to feel uneasy about my fortune. But, I swear to you, he has it in his grasp, and his intention was to keep it: and he is just the kind of man to go off with every penny there is and leave us in the lurch, the scoundrel! He knows quite well that I would not dishonour the name I bear by taking him into a court of law. I have studied him carefully: his position is both strong and weak; if we drive him to extremities, I am as good as ruined."

"Is he a swindler, then?"

"Alas yes, father," she said, throwing herself into a chair and bursting into tears. "I wished to hide it from you, to spare you the grief of knowing that you had married me to such a man. His secret vices and his soul, body and mind, he is all of one piece. He is horrible: I loathe and despise him! Yes, I cannot think bad enough of this vile Nucingen after what he has said to me. A man who could have anything to do with such business machinations as he described to-day, is utterly without shame, and if I fear him, it is

because his mind is now an open book to me. He proposed frankly, he, my own husband, that I should have full liberty—and you know what that means?—should have it on condition that I make myself a tool in his hands in case things go wrong with his speculations! That is to say, that I should permit him to operate behind the legal shelter of my name."

"But there are laws! But there is a Place de Grève for sons-in-law of that sort!" cried Père Goriot. "Why, I would guillotine him myself, if there were no other headsman to do it."

"No, father, there are no laws that can reach him. Here, in a couple of words, and stripped of the circumlocutions in which he wrapped it, is what he said: 'Either everything goes under and you are ruined, and are left without half a farthing in the world—since if *you* won't act as my accomplice, nobody else can—or you will leave me free to carry those speculations to a prosperous issue.' Is that explicit? He is dependent on my co-operation. He does not need to fear that his wife will overreach him; he knows that I will let him keep his money and be content with my own. What I am asked to enter into, under the menace of being ruined if I refuse, is an association to plunder and steal. He buys out my conscience, and by way of payment leaves me free to be Eugène's wife without disturbance. 'I connive at your faults: give me leave, you, to commit crimes and to ruin poor people!' Is this explicit enough yet? Do you know what he means by business speculations? He buys building lands in his own name, then he gets men of straw to run up houses on them. These men bargain with contractors to do the building, and they pay them in bills drawn at a long date.

Then they make surrender of these houses to my husband, ostensibly on account of some trifling debt. He is thus left in full possession of the property, whilst these men settle with the contractors by going bankrupt. The name of the house of Nucingen, you see, has been used to dazzle the poor contractors. This I have found out. I have also found out that Nucingen, in order to be in a position to prove that he has made large payments, has been transferring great sums of money to Amsterdam, London, Naples, and Vienna. How can we get hold of these moneys?"

Eugène heard a dull thud from the next room; Père Goriot must have fallen on his knees.

"*Mon Dieu!* what have I done to you? Delivered my daughter into the power of this wretch, who will exact his own pleasure from her. Forgive me, my child!" cried the old man.

"Yes, if I am in an abyss to-day, you are, perhaps, to blame," said Delphine. "We daughters have so little sense when we marry! What do we know about the world, or business, or men, or life? Our fathers ought to think for us. Dear father! I am not blaming you in the least—forgive me for having said that. In this matter the whole blame lies with myself. No, no! do not cry, papa," she said, kissing her father's brow.

"Don't you cry, either, my little Delphine. Look up, dear, and let me kiss away these tears. There, there! *I'm* going to put this old noddle in trim, and unravel the tangle that your husband has made of your affairs."

"No, leave it in my hands; I shall be able to manage him. He is fond of me; very well, I shall use my influence to bring him to invest

some of my capital at once in real estate, on my own account. Perhaps I shall get him to buy back, in my name, his estate of Nucingen in Alsace—I know he is inclined to do it. Only, see you come to-morrow to look into his books and his whole business. M. Derville knows nothing about mercantile affairs. No, don't come to-morrow; I do not want to be upset. Madame de Beauséant's ball takes place on the following day; I want to take care of myself, so as to look pretty and bright, and be a credit to my dear Eugène! Let us look at his room."

At this moment a cab drew up in the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, and the voice of Madame de Restaud was heard from the staircase saying to Sylvie: "Is my father in?"

This circumstance came to Eugène's relief in the nick of time. He had been about to throw himself on the bed, and feign that he was asleep.

"Oh, father, has anyone told you about Anastasie?" said Delphine, on recognising her sister's voice. "It would seem that some very strange things are happening in that household."

"What sort of things?" asked Père Goriot: "That would be the end of me. My poor head will not hold out against a second calamity."

"Good morning, father," said the Comtesse, entering the room.—"Oh, *you* are here, Delphine!"

Madame de Restaud seemed disconcerted at meeting her sister.

"Good morning, Nasie," said the Baronne. "Do you think it wonderful that I should be here? *I* see my father every day."

"Since when?"

"If you came here you would know."

"Don't worry me, Delphine," said the Com-

tesse in a melancholy voice. "I am very unhappy, I am lost. Oh, my poor father! lost beyond remedy this time!"

"What is the matter, Nasie?" cried Père Goriot. "Tell us everything, my child. See, she is turning white! Come, Delphine, help her; be kind to her, do, and I shall love you more than ever—if that could be!"

"Poor Nasie!" said Madame de Nucingen, leading her sister to a chair. "Tell us what it is. You see here the two people in all the world who love you enough to forgive you everything. Family affection, you see, is the surest after all."

She made her inhale some smelling-salts, and the Comtesse revived.

"It will kill me," said Père Goriot. "Well, well," he added, stirring his fire of turfs, "come over here, both of you. I am cold. What is it, Nasie? Speak quickly—you are killing me. . ."

"Well, then," said the poor woman, "my husband knows all. Just imagine it, father—and do you remember that bill of exchange of Maxime's some time ago? Well, that was not the first; I had paid a great many before that. About the beginning of January, M. de Trailles seemed to be in very low spirits. He said nothing to me about it; but it is so easy to read the heart of one whom one loves, that a mere nothing is sufficient. And besides, one seems to divine things, somehow. Indeed, he was more loving, more affectionate, than I had ever known him—I was never so happy in my life. Poor Maxime! in his own mind he was *bidding me good-bye;* so he has told me since. He intended to blow his brains out! Well, I importuned and beseeched him. For two hours I knelt before him in such

a state. . . and then he told me he owed a hundred thousand francs! Oh, papa, a hundred thousand francs! I almost went crazy. You had not got the money. I had already devoured. . ."

"No," said Père Goriot, "I could not have got that amount, unless I had gone and stolen it. But I would have done it, Nasie! I will go *now*."

These last words came from him in hollow gasps, with a sound like the rattle in the throat of the dying, and gave a measure of the agony of this paternal love when brought to utter powerlessness. The two sisters remained silent for a time. Not the most selfish heart, indeed, could have been untouched by that cry, which revealed the intensity of his despair as the falling pebble measures the depth of an abyss.

"I found it, father, by disposing of what did not belong to me," said the Comtesse, bursting into tears.

Delphine was moved; she laid her head on her sister's shoulder, and wept with her.

"Then it is all true!" she said.

Anastasie bowed her head; Madame de Nucingen threw her arms around her sister, kissed her tenderly, and pressed her to her heart.

"Here you will always be loved, without being judged for your fault," she said.

"My darlings," said Père Goriot, in a faint voice, "why should it be misfortune that brings you together like this?"

"To save Maxime's life, and to save my whole happiness," continued the Comtesse, encouraged by these tokens of a warm and compassionate affection, "I took to a usurer whom you know—a man made in the workshops of Hell, a man in-

capable of pity, one M. Gobseck—I took to him the family diamonds which M. de Restaud values so highly: his, mine, no matter whose, I sold them all. *Sold them*—do you understand? Maxime was saved; but I—I am dead. Restaud found it all out."

"Who told him? How? I will kill that traitor!" cried Père Goriot.

"Yesterday he called me into his room; I went. 'Anastasie,' he said to me in a voice—— Oh, his voice was enough, I divined everything. 'Where are your diamonds?'—'In my room.'—'No,' he said, fixing his eyes on me, 'they are there, on that chest of drawers.' He lifted a handkerchief, and revealed the casket. 'You know where they have come from!' he said to me. I fell at his feet. . . I wept, I asked him what death he wished to see me die."

"You said that!" cried Père Goriot. "By the sacred name of God, if any man should hurt one or other of you, as long as I am alive, he may tell himself with assurance that I shall burn him before a slow fire. Yes, I would cut him into strips like. . ."

Père Goriot's voice ceased, his words dying in his throat.

"Then, dear, he asked something of me more terrible than death. Heaven preserve every other woman from hearing what I had to hear!"

"I shall murder that man," said Père Goriot, quietly. "But he has only one life, and he owes me two. And then, what next?" he continued, looking at Anastasie.

"Well," the Comtesse went on, "after a pause he fixed his regard upon me: 'Anastasie,' he said, 'I shall bury all this in silence, and we shall continue to live together, for we have children.

I shall not kill M. de Trailles, for I might miss him if I tried; if I attempted other ways of getting rid of him, I might bring myself into conflict with the Law. To kill him in your arms would be to bring dishonour on *those* children. But if you do not wish to see your children perish, nor their father, nor me, you must accept two conditions which I impose. Answer me: have I a child of my own?' I answered Yes. 'Which one?' he asked.—'Ernest, our eldest.'—'Good,' he said. 'Now swear to obey me in future in one thing.' I swore. 'You will sign a deed transferring the whole of your property to me whenever I ask you to do so.'"

"Don't sign," cried Père Goriot. "Never you sign anything of the sort. Ha-ha! M. de Restaud! you do not know how to make your wife happy, so she seeks her happiness where it is to be found, and now you want to make her suffer for your idiotic defects. . . He shall find *me* in his path—I stand there, yes, I, and cry *Halt!*—Make yourself at ease, Nasie. Ah, he cares about his heir, does he! Good, good! I shall get hold of that son of his—who, by thunder, is my grandson, too. I can surely see him, the little chap. I shall stow him away in my "village"—I shall take good care of him, never you fear. Then I will make that brute come to terms, saying to him: 'It is between us two! If you want your son back, restore my daughter's property to her, and let her have leave to do as she pleases.'"

"Father!"

"Yes, your father! Ah, I am a father indeed. Let that blackguard of an aristocrat mind how he illtreats my daughters! *Tonnerre!* there is I don't know what in my veins; there is the blood of a tiger there—I should like to tear those two

men to pieces. Oh, children! and this, then, is the life you have to live? Ah, it is death to me. . . . What will become of you then, when I shall no longer be here? Fathers ought all to live as long as their children are alive. Ah, dear God! how badly you have arranged this world of yours! And yet You have a son also, according to what they tell us; You ought not, then, to allow us fathers to suffer in our children. What, my darlings! so it is only to your sorrows that I am indebted for seeing you. You only take me into the secret of your tears. Well then, yes; you do love me, I know you do. Come then, always come here with your griefs; my heart is large enough to receive them all! Yes, you might tear it to pieces, and every fragment of mine would make another father's heart. If only I could take all your troubles upon myself, could suffer for you. . . . Ah! when you were little things, how happy you were then. . ."

"It was the only happy time we have ever had," said Delphine. "Where are the days when we slid down from the top of the sacks in the great granary!"

"That is not all, father;" said Anastasie, in the ear of the old man, who gave a violent start at the words. "The diamonds did not bring a hundred thousand francs. Maxime is at extremities. We only need other twelve thousand francs to make up the payments. He has promised me that he will be steady in future, and that he will give over play. I have nothing in the world now except his love, and I have paid for it *so* dearly that I should die if I lost him now. I have given up for him fortune, and honour, and peace of mind, and my own children. Oh, do something

to ensure at least that Maxime shall remain a free man and undisgraced, and that he may continue to mix in the society from which he will be able to go on and make a career. And besides, more than my happiness depends upon him now; there are our children, who would be left without provision. So, if he is sent to Sainte-Pélagie, there would be nothing but ruin for us all."

"I have not the money, Nasie. There is nothing left—nothing left! It is the end of the world. Yes, that is it, the world begins to crumble away. Fly, save yourselves at once! —Ah! I have still my silver buckles and six spoons and forks, the first I had in my life. But that is all—I have nothing more, except my life annuity of twelve hundred francs. . . ."

"What have you done, then, with your money in the funds?"

"I have sold out and have kept this remainder as provision for my own needs. I wanted twelve thousand francs to fit out some rooms for Fifine."

"In your own house, Delphine?" said Madame de Restaud to her sister.

"Oh, what matters about that," struck in Père Goriot; "the twelve thousand francs are spent."

"Now I begin to see," said the Comtesse. "The rooms are for M. de Rastignac. Ah! my poor Delphine, stop in time. Be warned by what has come to me."

"M. de Rastignac, my dear, is not the kind of young man who ruins his mistress."

"Thank you, Delphine!—In such a crisis of misfortune as this, I expected something better from you; but, indeed, you never loved me."

"Yes, she does love you, Nasie!" cried Père Goriot; "she said so to me just a little ago. We were talking of you and she argued with me that

you were beautiful, and that she was only pretty, no more than pretty!"

"She!" repeated the Comtesse. "She is pretty cold—cold and pretty, indeed!"

"And if I am cold," said Delphine, flushing, "how have you behaved towards me? You have refused to acknowledge me—you have closed against me the door of every house I wished to enter—you have never let slip a single chance of causing me pain or vexation. For my part, I have not been in the habit of coming, like you, to get money out of our poor father here, thousand francs upon thousand francs, until his whole means are gone, and he is reduced to the state that we see him in now! Look around you, sister; this is all *your* work! *I* have seen my father as often as I could. I have not turned him to the door; nor have I come afterwards to lick his hands when I had need of his help. I did not so much as know that he had spent that twelve thousand francs on my account. I, at least, am not a spendthrift, and you know it; and if papa has given me presents from time to time, it is not because I have come to beg for them."

"You were more fortunate than I; M. de Marsay was a man of wealth, and you know something about that. But you have always been as mean as money. Good-bye! I have no longer either a sister or. . . ."

"Hush, Nasie!" cried Père Goriot.

"Only such a sister as *you* would have been capable of repeating what everybody else has ceased to believe; you are an unnatural creature!" said Delphine.

"Hush, children, hush! or I shall kill myself before your eyes."

"Never mind, Nasie, I forgive you," continued Madame de Nucingen; "I know you are unhappy. But I am not so unkind as you. To think of you saying *that* to me at the moment when I felt ready to do anything in the world to help you, even to submit to the will of my husband, which is what I would not do for my own sake, nor for. . . . But it is quite in keeping with all the other things you have done to hurt me during the last nine years."

"Children, children, kiss and be friends! You are angels, both of you," said Père Goriot, laying his hand on Anastasie's arm.

"No, let me alone!" she cried, shaking off her father's hand. "She has less mercy for me than my own husband. One would think, to hear her talk, that she was an example of all the virtues!"

"I would rather have people think that I was obliged to M. de Marsay for money, than have to confess that M. de Trailles had *cost* me more than two hundred thousand francs."

"Delphine!" cried the Comtesse, taking a step towards her.

"I shall tell you the truth, if you begin to slander me," replied the Baronne coldly.

"Delphine! you are a. . . ."

Père Goriot rushed between them and caught hold of the Comtesse, stopping her words by putting his hand over her mouth.

"Good heavens, father!" cried Anastasie; "what on earth have you been handling this morning?"

"Ah yes, I oughtn't to have done that!" said the poor father, wiping his hands on his trousers. "But I did not know that you were coming. I have been packing for my removal."

He was quite happy at having committed a

fault that turned his daughter's anger on himself. "Ah," the old man continued as he sat down, "you have broken my heart between you. I am dying, children! My head feels as if it were on fire. Do be nice, do love one another, now! You are putting an end to my life. Come Delphine, Nasie—you are in the right, both of you—no, you are both in the wrong. Come now, Dedel," he continued, turning to the Baronne, and looking at her with eyes full of tears. "She needs twelve thousand francs; let us try and find them for her. Oh, do not look at each other like that!" He fell on his knees before Delphine. "Ask her to forgive you—do ask her, to please me," he said in her ear. "She is more unhappy than you are; come now, do!"

"Poor Nasie," said Delphine, alarmed at the wild and crazed expression of grief on her father's face, "I was in the wrong, kiss me. . . ."

"Ah, now you pour balm into my heart!" cried Père Goriot. "But where are we to find twelve thousand francs?—Supposing I were to offer myself for army service, as a substitute?"

"Oh, father!" cried the two daughters, throwing their arms about him. "No, no!"

"God will reward you for that thought," said Delphine. "Our whole lives could never do it—could they, Nasie?"

"And then, my poor father, *that* would be a mere drop in the bucket," observed the Comtesse.

"Does a man's flesh and blood count for nothing, then?" cried the old man in despair. "Oh, Nasie! I would devote my life to whoever would save you now; I would kill a man for him; I would do what Vautrin did, I would go to the hulks! I. . . ."

He stopped suddenly, as if struck by a thunderbolt.

"Nothing left!" he said, tearing his hair. "If only I knew where to go and steal—but it is so difficult to know where. There is the Bank; but it needs more than one man to rob a Bank, and it takes time. Yes, it is time I was dead, that is all that is left for me to do; just to die. I am no longer good for anything, I am no longer a father! No: she comes to me asking; she comes to me in need; and I, wretch that I am, I have nothing for her. Ah! You went and bought yourself annuities, old scoundrel, you that have daughters! Do you love them no longer, then? Die! die like a dog as you are! Yes, I am lower than a dog, a dog would never have behaved so. Oh, my head . . . it boils and throbs!"

"Oh, Papa!" cried the two young women, throwing their arms about him to keep him from dashing his head against the wall, "calm yourself, do calm yourself."

There was a sound of sobbing, which filled Eugène with sudden alarm. He seized the bill of exchange signed by Vautrin, and seeing that the stamp upon it was sufficient for a larger sum, he changed the figures and made it a regular bill of exchange for twelve thousand francs, payable to the order of Goriot. With this in his hand he entered the old man's room.

"Here is your money in full, Madame," he said, handing the paper to the Comtesse. "I was asleep and your conversation awoke me; and in this way I have learned how much I owe to M. Goriot. That is a bill for the amount, which you will be able to negotiate; I shall meet it faithfully when it is presented."

The Comtesse stood motionless and silent for a time, holding the paper in her hand.

"Delphine," she said, pale, and quivering with anger, and indignation, and rage. "I was willing to forgive you everything. God is my witness that it is true: but *this!* What! this gentleman was *there* and you knew it—and you were paltry enough to take your revenge by letting me betray to him my secrets, my life, my children's lives, my shame, and my honour! But there! you are nothing to me now: from this hour I shall hate you, I shall hurt you in every possible way—I—shall——"

But anger choked her utterance; the words died in her parched throat.

"But he is my child, my son—he is your own brother, your saviour!" cried Père Goriot. "Embrace him, then, Nasie! Stay, I shall embrace him," he continued, clasping Eugène with a kind of passion. "Oh, my child! to you I shall be more than a father, I shall be home and every dear relation: I would that I were God, and I would throw the universe at your feet!—Do kiss him, Nasie dear: he is not a man, he is an angel, a real angel."

"Let her be, father; she is mad now," said Delphine.

"Mad! mad!—and you, what are *you?*" demanded Madame de Restaud.

"Children!" cried the old man, "if you continue this, I shall die." He fell upon the bed as if struck by a cannon ball. "They are killing me," he murmured.

The Comtesse looked at Eugène, who stood there motionless, stupefied by the violence of this scene.

"Monsieur. . . ?" she said. Her gesture,

voice, and look all asked him a question; she appeared not even to notice her father, whose waistcoat was being quickly undone by Delphine. Eugène answered the question without waiting to hear it put into words:

"I shall meet the bill, Madame," he said, "and I shall be silent about it."

"You have killed our father, Nasie!" said Delphine, pointing to the old man, who lay unconscious. The Comtesse fled from the room.

"I forgive her with all my heart," said the father, opening his eyes. "Her position is frightful; it would turn a stronger head than hers. Comfort Nasie, be nice to her. Promise that to your poor father," he said, pressing Delphine's hand—"to your poor father who is dying."

"But what ails you, father?" she asked, in terrible fear.

"Nothing, nothing. It will pass away. There is something that presses on my brow—a headache. . . . Poor Nasie, what a future!"

At this moment the Comtesse re-entered. She knelt down beside her father:

"Forgive me!" she cried.

"Come," said Père Goriot, "now you are hurting me more than ever."

"Sir," said the Comtesse to Rastignac, looking at him through her tears, "my sorrow has made me unjust to you. . . . You will be a brother to me, will you not?" she continued, and held out her hand.

"Nasie," said Delphine, putting her arms around her, "my little Nasie! let us forget everything."

"Not I," she answered, "I shall never forget it!"

"My angels," said Père Goriot aloud, "you have drawn away a curtain that was over my eyes, your voices have called me back to life. Now, kiss each other once more.—Well, Nasie, this bill will save you, will it not?"

"I hope it will. And, I say, papa, will you put your signature to it?"

"There, what a beast I am, to be sure, to have forgotten that! But I have not felt very well, Nasie, so you must not be angry with me. Send and let me know that you have got out of your trouble. No; I shall come myself. But no, I shall not come; I could not bear to look on your husband again, I should kill him on the spot. As for alienating your property, I shall have something to say about that. Quick, away now, my child; and see if you cannot make Maxime behave better."

Eugène stayed, not yet out of his amazement.

"That poor Anastasie has always had a violent temper," said Madame de Nucingen, "but she has a kind heart."

"She came back for the endorsement," whispered Eugène in Delphine's ear.

"You believe she did?"

"I wish I did not believe it. Put no trust in her," he answered, raising his eyes as if to confide to Heaven the thoughts which he dared not express aloud.

"Yes, she has always been something of an actress; and my poor father has been content to take her for what she appeared to be."

"How are you now, my good father Goriot?" said Rastignac to the old man.

"I should like to go to sleep," he answered.

Eugène helped him to bed, and presently the

old man fell asleep, holding Delphine by the hand. Then his daughter withdrew.

"This evening at the Italiens," she said to Eugène; "and you will be able to tell me how he is. To-morrow, Monsieur, you shall remove from here. Let me see your room. . . Oh, how horrible!" she cried, as she crossed the threshold. "Why, you were worse lodged, even, than my father! Eugène, you have behaved nobly, and I will love you more than ever for it, if that were possible. But, my child, if you want to make your way in life, you must not go throwing sums of twelve thousand francs out of the window in that way. The Comte de Trailles is a gambler, though my sister tries to blind herself to it. He would have known how to find the twelve thousand francs he needed, where he is in the habit of losing and winning mountains of money."

A sound of moaning brought them back to Père Goriot's room. The old man was apparently asleep; but as the two lovers drew near to him, they heard the words:

"They are not happy!"

Whether he slept or waked, the tone in which these words were spoken went to his daughter's heart. She approached the pallet-bed on which her father lay, and kissed him on the brow. He opened his eyes.

"It is Delphine!" he said.

"Well, how are you now?" she asked.

"All right," he said. "Don't be worried about me. I am going out. Go, go now, my children, and be happy."

Eugène went with Delphine as far as her own door; but being uneasy owing to the condition in which he had left Goriot, he declined to stay and dine with her, and returned to the Maison

Vauquer. He found Père Goriot in the dining-room, about to take his place at the table. Bianchon had chosen for himself a place from which he could study carefully the countenance of the vermicelli-maker. When he saw him take up his bread, and smell it, in order to judge the quality of the flour, the student shook his head ominously—for he had marked in this movement an entire absence of anything that could be called volition, conscious activity.

"Come over and sit beside me, O Habitant of Cochin!" said Eugène.

Bianchon crossed over, the more willingly because the change of seat would bring him alongside the old boarder.

"What is wrong with him?" asked Rastignac.

"Unless I am much mistaken, it is all up with him! Something very extraordinary must be going on in him, and he seems to me to be labouring under the strain of imminent serous apoplexy. The lower part of the face is in fair repose, but the upper part displays involuntary twitches—just see! Then the eyes have the peculiar aspect that denotes an extravasation of serum in the brain. Wouldn't you say they look as if they were full of fine dust? I shall know more about it to-morrow morning."

"Is there any cure in such a case?"

"None. Perhaps one might defer death if one could manage to set up a reaction towards the extremities; but if the symptoms have not disappeared by to-morrow night, the poor old fellow is done for. Do you know of anything that has happened to bring on the malady? He would seem to have received a violent shock, under which his mental faculties have broken down."

"Yes, that was so," said Eugène; and he called

to mind how the two daughters had struck such a pitiless succession of blows at their father's heart.

"Delphine, at any rate, loves her father," he told himself.

That evening at the Italiens he spoke very guardedly at first, that he might not throw Madame Nucingen into unnecessary alarm.

"You must not worry yourself," she said in reply to his first words. "My father has a strong constitution, really, only we shook him rather badly this morning. Our fortunes are in peril, and perhaps you hardly realise what a terrible thing that is. For my part, I should not be able to live through it, were it not that the possession of your love makes me incapable even of feeling the troubles that would have caused, not long ago, a killing anguish. To-day there is only one fear, only one possible misfortune for me: that I should lose the affection that has for the first time made me feel glad to live. Outside of this one feeling, everything is indifferent to me; *you* are my everything, and I love or care for nothing else. If I am glad at being rich, it is because I can please you better so. To my shame be it spoken, I am more a woman in love than I am a daughter; more devoted to you, than anxious about my father's condition. Why? I do not know why. My whole life lives in you: my father gave me a heart, but it is you who first set it beating. The whole world may reproach me for this, but what does it matter if only you—and *you* have no right to blame me for it—if only you hold me blameless, exonerate me for the offence to which I have been urged by the force of a love that would not be withstood? Do you think I am an unnatural daughter? Ah, no! it

is impossible that I should not love so kind and good a father as ours. But I could not keep him from knowing, in the end, the natural sequel of our deplorable marriages. Why did he permit them? Was it not his part to think for us, to consider everything carefully? To-day, I know, he suffers as much as we do; but how are we to help it? Console him!—we cannot console him in the least. Our resignation would only cause him a grief more cruel than the hurt that is done him by our reproaches and our complainings. There are situations in life from which you can draw no issue but bitterness."

Eugène was silent, for his heart was touched deeply by this frank avowal of a sincere feeling. If Parisiennes are often false, intoxicated with vanity, self-absorbed, frivolous, heart-whole in their intrigues, it is none the less true that when they really love they offer up a richer sacrifice of sentiment at the altar of their passions; out of all their littlenesses they emerge greatly to become as sublime as they were formerly small. And Eugène was struck, moreover, by the penetrating and just intellectual faculty which this woman brought to bear upon the most natural attachments of the heart, now that a privileged affection had separated her from them and planted her aloof. But Madame de Nucingen took this silence of Eugène amiss.

"What are you thinking of?" she asked him.

"I was thinking of what you have just said. I had thought, until this moment, that I loved you more than you loved me."

She smiled, then promptly repressed all sign of the pleasure that she felt, that their conversation might be kept within the bounds ordained by convention. She had never till now listened

to the trembling avowals of a young and sincere love. A few words more, and she would not remain mistress of herself. She hastened to give a new turn to the conversation.

"By the way, Eugène," she said, "have you heard what is going on? All Paris will go to Madame de Beauséant's to-morrow. The Rochefides and the Marquis d'Ajuda have arranged with one another to keep the news from getting about; but as a fact, the king put his signature to the marriage-contract yesterday; and your poor cousin knows nothing about it yet. She will not be able to get out of giving this ball, and the Marquis will not be there. People are talking of nothing else at present."

"And the world laughs at an infamy, and connives and lends its presence! Don't you know that this will kill Madame de Beauséant?"

"Oh, no!" said Delphine smiling; "you do not know that kind of woman. But all Paris will go to her house, and I shall be there! I owe you this happiness, also."

"But," said Rastignac, "may it not be one of those silly reports that people set running about Paris?"

"Well, we shall know the truth to-morrow."

Eugène did not return to the Maison Vauquer; he was unable to deny himself the pleasure of taking possession of his new chambers. He had had to leave Delphine on the previous night an hour after midnight: this time it was Delphine who left him, returning to her own house towards two in the morning. He rose late in the day, and waited for Madame de Nucingen, who came to breakfast with him about noon. Youth is so avid of those blithe hours of pleasure that he had almost forgotten Père Goriot's existence.

While he slowly accustomed himself to the varied elegance that now surrounded him, all of it his own, and with Madame de Nucingen there to enhance the value of it all—the hours passed like a long festival for him. About four o'clock, however, the two lovers bethought themselves of Père Goriot, for they were reminded suddenly of the happiness which he had promised himself that he should find in living there. Eugène now said that if the old man was going to be ill he ought to be removed at once, and he left Delphine and hurried to the Maison Vauquer. Neither Père Goriot nor Bianchon were at table.

"Well," said the painter, "Père Goriot has fairly foundered! Bianchon is upstairs with him. The old fellow had a visit from one of his daughters, the Comtesse de Restaurama. After that, he *would* go out, and now he is worse than ever. Society is about to lose one of its most brilliant ornaments."

Rastignac sprang towards the staircase.

"Hey! Monsieur Eugène!"

"Monsieur Eugène! Madame is calling you," cried Sylvie.

"Monsieur," said the widow, "M. Goriot and you should have left on the 15th of February. That was three days ago, and this is the 18th, so I ought to be paid a month in advance by both of you. But if you will guarantee the payment for Père Goriot, I shall be content with your word."

"Why so? Can't you trust him?"

"Trust him! If the old fellow were to lose his head and die, his daughters would not pay me a farthing; and all that he will leave in his room would not bring ten francs. He carried away his last spoons and forks this morning, I don't know why. He had got himself up like a young

man. Heaven forgive me! I believe he had rouged his face—I thought he had renewed his youth."

"I shall be answerable for everything," said Eugène. A shiver of horror ran through him. He felt that a catastrophe was at hand.

He went up to Père Goriot's room. The old man lay upon the bed, and Bianchon was with him.

"Good morning, father," said Eugène.

The old man smiled gently, and turned a glassy gaze upon Eugène.

"How is she?" he said.

"She is quite well; but how are you?"

"Not bad."

"Don't fatigue him," said Bianchon, drawing Eugène towards a corner of the room.

"Well, how is it?" asked Rastignac.

"Nothing short of a miracle can save him. Serous congestion has set in. I have applied mustard plasters, and luckily he feels them, so they are acting."

"Can he be removed?"

"Quite impossible! He must stay where he is, and lie still and be spared all excitement. . ."

"My dear Bianchon, we two shall look after him!"

"I have already had in the head physician of my hospital."

"And what does he say."

"He will say to-morrow evening. He has promised to come after he has done his rounds. Unluckily, this confounded old chap committed a folly this morning for which he refuses to give any reason. He is as obstinate as a mule. When I begin to talk to him, he pretends not to hear, or goes to sleep so as not to answer me;

or else, if he is lying wide awake, he begins to groan. Well, he went out some time this morning—walked out into the streets of Paris—nobody knows where to. He took with him all the articles of any value that he had left, and has evidently been engaged in some infernal bargaining—and, as a result, has outrun his physical resources! One of his daughters has been here."

"Was it the Comtesse?" asked Eugène—"a tall, dark woman, with large bright eyes, small feet, slender figure?"

"Yes."

"Leave me alone with him for a little," said Rastignac. "I am going to confess him. He will tell me everything, you see."

"And meanwhile I shall go and dine. Only, try and not wake him up too much; for we have still some hopes of him."

"Put your mind at rest about that."

"They will enjoy themselves well to-morrow," said Père Goriot to Eugène, when he found that they were alone. "They are going to a grand ball."

"What were you about this morning, Papa, to make yourself so ill that you have got to stay in bed this evening?"

"Nothing at all."

"Has not Anastasie been here?" asked Rastignac.

"Yes," answered Père Goriot.

"Well, then, tell me all about it. What did she want from you this time?"

"Oh, she was very miserable!" he answered, collecting all his strength in order to speak. "You see, my boy, since that affair of the diamonds, Nasie has not had a single sou in her possession. She had ordered, on account of this

ball, a beautiful robe, which was to become her like a jewel. But her dressmaker was infamous enough to refuse her credit; so, her waiting-woman paid a thousand francs on account for the dress. Poor Nasie, to think of her being brought to that!—it made my heart bleed to hear of it. Then the waiting-woman, getting to know that Restaud had put Nasie under severe conditions, began to fear that she would lose her money; so she got the dressmaker to agree not to send the dress home until the thousand francs were repaid. The ball is to-morrow, and the gown ready; and Nasie in despair. She wanted to borrow my forks and spoons that she might pawn them. Her husband willed that she should go to that ball, and wear before the eyes of all Paris those diamonds which, according to the rumour, she had *sold*. Now, how could she go and say to that heartless beast, 'I owe a thousand francs —please pay them for me?' She could not do it; I saw that at once, myself. Her sister Delphine is going to be there in a magnificent dress, and Anastasie ought not to be inferior to her younger sister. And then, she was just drowned in tears, my poor girl! I had been so humiliated at not having the twelve thousand francs for her the other day, that I would have given all that remains of my worthless life to redeem that fault. At one time, you see, I was strong enough to bear anything; but latterly this want of money has broken my heart. Ha-ha! I did not do it by halves—I faked and did myself up in fine style, and then I went and sold the forks and spoons and shoe buckles for six hundred francs. Next I went to Old Gobseck's and sold him one year's interest in my annuity for four hundred francs down. Bah! I can live on bread; I was able to

make do on that when I was a young man, and I can do it again. My Nasie shall have a happy evening, at any rate; and she shall be right smart, I tell you. I have the note for a thousand francs here, under my pillow. It warms me all through to have under my head something that is going to make my poor Nasie happy. She will be able, now, to send her ill-disposed Victoire packing. Whoever heard of a servant who refused to trust her mistress! I shall be looking quite well to-morrow. Nasie is coming at ten o'clock; and I don't want her to think that I am ill. For then they would not go to the ball; they would want to come and nurse me. Nasie will come to-morrow, and put her arms round me as if I were her baby. Her kisses will make me well again. And, for that matter, mightn't I very likely have spent that thousand francs at the apothecary's? I prefer to give them to my Nasie, *she* is the Cure-All for me! I shall comfort her in her misery, at least; and that will make up for the wrong I did in buying myself that annuity. She is at the bottom of an abyss, and I am not strong enough to lift her out of it. Ah! I shall go back to business; I shall go and buy grain in Odessa. Wheat brings three times as much here as it costs there. It is true there is a law against the importation of grain in its natural form, but the fine fellows who made that law never thought of excluding also the manufactured products which have wheat for their basis and first material. Aha! I just thought of that, thought of it myself, this morning. There is plenty of fine business to be done in starch."

"He is crazed," thought Eugène, as he looked at the old man; then he said aloud:

"Come now, lie down and rest; don't talk any more. . . ."

Bianchon having re-ascended, Eugène now went down to dinner. The two students sat up with him that night, keeping watch in turn; the one putting in the time by reading up his medical books, and the other writing home to his mother and sisters. The symptoms in evidence next morning justified, according to Bianchon, a favourable prognosis; but they also demanded the exercise of the most unremitting efforts that the two students could give—a labour, the details of which it were impossible to describe in the chaste and sensitive phraseology of our time. Leeches were applied to the wasted body of the old man, and therewith a succession of poultices, of warm foot-baths, and of various medical manipulations which taxed to the full both the strength and the devotion of the two young men. Madame de Restaud did not come; but she sent a messenger for the money.

"I thought she would come herself. But it is as well she didn't; she would have been made anxious about me," said the father. And he seemed to be quite glad that it was arranged so.

At seven o'clock that evening, Thérèse brought a letter from Delphine:

"What are you doing, my friend? But newly loved, am I to be thus early neglected? And yet you have revealed to me, in these confidences which heart pours into heart, a soul so beautiful that I cannot but think of you as one of those who are forever faithful, because they recognise how much gradation and variety there may be within the compass of a sincere affection. As you once said, when listening to the Prayer in *Mosé*: 'For some it is but one continuous note;

for others, it is the whole Infinite of music!' Do not forget that I wait for you this evening, to take me to Madame de Beauséant's ball. It is quite certain now that M. d'Ajuda's marriage-contract was signed at Court this morning, though the poor Vicomtesse did not get to know of it until two o'clock. All Paris is going to gather to her house, just as the people crowd in multitudes to the Place de Grève when there is an execution about to take place. Is it not horrible, that people should go thus to see whether this woman will stifle her grief, whether she will know how to die bravely? I am sure I should not go, my friend, if I had ever been there before. But, of course, she will never receive again, after this; so all the efforts that I have made would have gone for nothing. My position is entirely different from that of others. And besides, I am going there for your sake as well. I am waiting for you now. If you were not to come within the next two hours, I do not know whether I should pardon that felony."

Rastignac seized a pen and answered thus:

"I am waiting for the doctor, to learn from him whether your father has still a chance of life. He is now in a dying condition. I shall come, and bring you the doctor's verdict, and I fear that it will be a verdict of death. You will then consider whether you can go to the ball. A thousand loves."

The physician came at half-past eight. Though he could not give a very hopeful view of the case, he was not of opinion that there was any immediate risk of death. He foretold that there would be an alternation of rallies and relapses, and that on the course of these, the life and the reason of the old man would depend.

"It would be better for him if he were to die at once," was the doctor's last word.

Eugène left Goriot to Bianchon's care, and went off to take the sad news to Madame de Nucingen. To a heart still imbued as hers was with a sense of family devotion, such news must needs bring a suspension of all plans of pleasure.

"Tell her that she must enjoy herself all the same," cried Goriot, who had seemed to be asleep, but sat upright in bed when he heard Rastignac leaving the room.

The young man, almost heart-broken with grief, went into Delphine's presence. He found her with her hair already dressed, with her dancing slippers already on her feet, and with nothing but her ball dress to put on in order to set out. Nevertheless, when the artist is completing his picture, the last small touches demand more time than was required for filling in the whole breadth of the canvas.

"What! you are not dressed?" she said.

"But, Madame, your father. . . ."

"Still my father!" she cried, interrupting him. "You have no need to teach me the duty I owe to my father. I have known my father for quite a long time! Not a word, Eugène—I will not listen to a word, until you have gone and dressed! Thérèse has laid out everything to hand in your rooms. My carriage stands ready; take it, and then come back. We shall talk about my father on our way to the ball. We must set out early; if we get fixed in a row of carriages, and have to wait our turn, we shall be lucky if we get there by eleven o'clock."

"Madame. . . ."

"Go now—not a word!" she said, hastening into her boudoir to find a necklace.

"Do go, Monsieur Eugène, or Madame will be vexed," said Thérèse, hurrying off the young man, who withdrew with a sensation of dismay from the presence of this elegant parricide.

Arrived at his own rooms, he set about dressing himself, very thoughtful, sad, and dejected. He beheld the world of Paris then as an ocean of mire, and it seemed that a man must sink in it to the neck if he so much as touched it with his foot.

"And all its crimes are miserable crimes," he said to himself; "Vautrin is greater!"

He had seen Society in its three great phases or energies: Obedience, Struggle, Revolt—the Family, the World, Vautrin. He could not bring himself to choose his side. Obedience was dull and irksome, Revolt impossible, the issues of Struggle were all uncertain. His thoughts led him back to his own home and the family life there. He remembered the innocent emotions of that calm life, and recalled to memory the days he had spent amid the dear beings who loved him. *They* lived in obedience to the natural laws of hearth and home, and had found in that obedience a happiness that was full, and unbroken, and free from the tortures of anxiety. Yet, despite his good thoughts, he did not feel that he could dare to confess the religion of good souls to Delphine, or to prescribe filial virtue to her in the name of love. His education had already begun to bear its fruits; already he loved selfishly. He had intuitive power enough to have read the heart of Delphine, her real nature, by this time; and he felt pretty sure that she was capable of stepping across her father's dead body to get to that ball. Yet he had neither strength of mind for the task

of reasoning her into better thoughts, nor the courage to incur her anger, nor the virtue to leave her altogether.

"She would never forgive me for having put her in the wrong in a matter like this," he told himself.

Then he dwelt upon the physician's words; he tried to persuade himself that Père Goriot was not really so dangerously ill as he had supposed him to be: and so succeeded at last in putting together a sufficient heap of traitorous excuses for Delphine's behaviour. She did not really know the condition her father was in. If she went to see him now, the old man would himself order her to go off to the ball at once. It often happens like this, he told himself: we see the judgment of society, so exact in its insistence upon the moral claims of family, hastening to condemn as a crime an offence which is fairly excusable, since it has been determined and forced upon the apparent offender by the innumerable circumstances—difference of temperament, divergent interests, peculiarities of position—which continually modify the relation of members of a household to one another. In fine, Eugène was trying to deceive himself, was minded to make a sacrifice of his conscience to his mistress. His whole life had undergone a transformation during the past two days. Woman had entered into it, and had brought disorder; the claims of family had grown pale in her presence, who appropriated him, body and mind, to her own uses, as by an act of confiscation. Rastignac and Delphine had met at a moment when every circumstance in the life of each conspired to enhance the delight which their union was capable of yielding them; and

now their long-restrained passion had only gathered strength from that gratification of desire which passions mostly perish of. Now that this woman was fully his, Eugène discovered that until then he had only wished for her—he had not *loved* her until the morning of his happiness. And perhaps it is true that love is only gratitude for pleasure, received or receivable. So, worthless she might be, or sublime; but he worshipped this woman now in virtue of the pleasures which he had brought as a dower into her life and for all those which he had received in return: while Delphine loved Rastignac as Tantalus might have loved an Angel who had come to appease his hunger and quench the thirst in his parched throat.

"Well, how is my father?" asked Madame de Nucingen, when he returned in evening-dress.

"Very dangerously ill," he answered; "if you wish to give me a proof of your love, let us go and see him together."

"Very well," she said—"but after the ball. My dear Eugène, be nice, do, and don't preach to me."

They set out; Eugène sat in silence for part of the way.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"I can hear the rattle in your father's throat," he said, with a certain bitterness.

And with the hot eloquence of youth, he told her of the cruel action which Madame de Restaud's vanity had driven her to, of the life-or-death crisis brought on by her father's last act of devotion, and what the price of Anastasie's ball-dress was likely to be.

Delphine began to cry.

"I shall make myself ugly," she thought; and her tears ceased.

"I shall go and take care of my father," she said, aloud; "I shall not leave his bed-side."

"Ah! now you are what I would have you to be," exclaimed Rastignac.

The lamps of five hundred carriages lit up the approaches to the Hotel de Beauséant. On each side of the brightly-lighted gateway stood a gendarme in full splendour. The great world was flocking thither in such crowds, and every individual in it was so urgently eager to look upon this great lady at the moment of her fall, that the rooms on the ground floor were already full of people when Madame de Nucingen and Rastignac presented themselves. Never since the hour when Louis XIV. tore her lover away from La Grande Mademoiselle, and all the Court thereupon rushed to call upon that lady, had any love tragedy made such a sensation as this of Madame de Beauséant's. But the youngest daughter of the almost royal House of Burgundy now rose superior to her pain, and up to her last moment dominated that world of Paris, the vanities of which had only been accepted by her that she might make them subservient to the triumph of her passion. The most beautiful women in Paris were there to brighten the rooms with the splendour of their toilettes and their smiles. The most distinguished men at Court, Ministers and Ambassadors, men with every variety of personal lustre, and bedizened with stars and decorations and ribbons of every kind and colour—all pressed round the Vicomtesse now. The music of the orchestra resounded under the gilded roofs of this palace, that was

a solitude for its Queen. Madame de Beauséant stood at the entrance of the first salon to receive those guests of hers, who presented themselves in the guise of friends. Clad in a white robe, and without a single ornament in her simply-plaited hair, she appeared calm and serene, and made no display either of suffering or of pride, nor of any happiness which she did not feel. What passed in her soul, no one there could read; you would have said she was a Niobe carved in marble. In the smile that she turned on some of her most intimate friends there was a flash of mockery now and then; but to one and all she appeared just herself, as splendid as when she had stood in the halo of her happiness. The least sensitive man or woman there looked upon her with admiration, as the youth of Rome were wont to applaud the gladiator who could die in the arena with a smile. It seemed as if the great world had put on its festival garments to bid one of its sovereigns farewell.

"I was afraid that you would not come," she said to Rastignac.

"Madame," he answered, with emotion, taking her speech for a reproach, "I have come that I may be the last to go."

"Good," she said, taking his hand. "You are perhaps the only one whom I can trust among all the people here. My friend, when you give your love, give it to a woman whom you will be able to love always. Never forsake any woman."

Taking Rastignac's arm, she went with him into the card-room, and seated him beside her on a sofa.

"I want you," she said, "to go to the Marquis. Jacques, my manservant, will take you there, and will hand you a letter to give him. I am asking

him to return my letters. He will give you them all back, every one; I like to believe that. If you have the letters, take them up to my room. They will tell me that you are there."

She rose and went to meet the Duchesse de Langeais, her most intimate friend, who came, as all the world came. Rastignac set out. Feeling sure that the Marquis d'Ajuda would spend his evening at the Hôtel Rochefide, he asked for him there, and found him. The Marquis took the student to his own house, and gave him a casket, saying—

"They are all there."

He seemed about to speak, perhaps to ask Eugène about the ball, and whether anything had happened—perhaps he was about to confess to him that already he was utterly wretched on account of this marriage, as he was to be later on: but a flash of pride shone in his eyes, and he had the unhappy courage to make a secret of his noblest thoughts.

"Don't say anything to her about me, my dear Eugène."

He pressed Rastignac's hand under an impulse of affection and sadness, and let him go. Eugène returned to the Hôtel de Beauséant, and was taken to the Vicomtesse's room, where he saw all the signs of preparation for a departure. Seating himself by the fire, he gazed on the cedar-wood casket, and fell into a deep and melancholy reverie. Madame de Beauséant had begun to have in his mind the proportions of a Homeric goddess.

"Ah, my friend! . . ." said the Vicomtesse, entering the room; she went up to Rastignac and laid her hand on his shoulder.

He looked at his cousin. Her uplifted eyes

were full of tears. The hand that hung by her side trembled, as she raised the other towards the casket. Suddenly she took hold of it, put it in the fire, and watched it burn.

"They are dancing! They all came in good time to-night, but death will not arrive till late. Hush! my friend," she said, placing a finger on Rastignac's lips, to prevent his speech, "I shall never see Paris nor the world any more. At five o'clock in the morning I shall set out on my journey, to bury myself in the depths of Normandy. All my preparations have had to be made since three o'clock this afternoon, signing documents, arranging my affairs. I had no one whom I could send to. . ."

She broke off.

"He was sure to be found at. . ."

She broke off again, overcome by grief. In moments like these there is room for nothing but suffering, and certain words are impossible to utter.

"Well," she continued, "I counted upon you to do me this service to-night. I should like to give you some pledge of friendship. I shall think often of you, who have seemed to me to be kind and noble, fresh-hearted and sincere in the midst of a world in which those qualities are so rare. I hope you will think of me sometimes. Stay," she said, looking round the room, "here is the box that I used to keep my gloves in. Every time I opened it, before going to a ball or to the theatre, I used to feel that I must be beautiful, for I felt so happy; and I never touched it save to leave in it some kindly thought. There is much of *me* in this thing; the whole being of a Madame de Beauséant who lives no more. Accept it then; I shall see that it is taken to your

rooms in the Rue d'Artois. Madame de Nucingen looks very handsome to-night; see that you love her truly. Should we never meet again, at least be sure, my friend, that in my prayers I shall remember you, who have been so kind to me. And now let us go downstairs. I do not wish to let them think that I have been crying. I have all eternity before me, and I shall be alone where I go, with no one to demand of me a reason for my tears. One last look at this room."

She stopped. For a moment she pressed her hands over her eyes, and then dashed away the tears; then she bathed her face with cold water and took the student's arm.

"Let us go!" she said.

Never had anything waked in Rastignac's heart such deep and powerful emotion as did the spectacle of this great grief so nobly restrained. They returned to the ball-room, and Madame de Beauséant then went about amongst her guests leaning on Eugène's arm; a last and delicate act of kindness on the part of this woman, whose nature was ever gracious. He presently saw the two sisters, Madame de Restaud and Madame de Nucingen. The Comtesse was in full splendour, with her every diamond in open display; but the touch of them may well have scorched the wearer, who knew that she was never to wear them again. Whatever support her pride and her love may have afforded her, she yet found it hard to bear up under her husband's glance. It was a sight little calculated to lessen the sadness of Rastignac's thoughts: for he seemed to see, athwart the blaze of the diamonds which those sisters wore, the wretched truckle-bed on which Père Goriot lay. Noticing Eugène's melancholy, and

mistaking its cause, the Vicomtesse withdrew her arm.

"Go!" she said, "I must not deprive you of a pleasure."

He was at once taken possession of by Delphine, who was full of happiness because of the impression she had made, and eager to lay at the student's feet the homage she had received in this new social world, a world in which she hoped to have a recognised place in future.

"What do you think of Nasie?" she asked.

"She looks as if she had cashed every asset for the occasion—even her father's death."

Towards four in the morning, the crowds began to thin away: presently the music ceased. The Duchesse de Langeais and Rastignac found themselves alone in the great ball-room. The Vicomtesse entered, thinking to find only the student there. She had just said good-bye to M. de Beauséant, who went off to bed, repeating as he went:

"It is a great mistake, my dear, to go and shut yourself up, at your age! Stay with us, do."

On seeing the Duchesse in the room, Madame de Beauséant could not restrain an exclamation.

"I have divined your intention, Clara!" said Madame de Langeais. "You are going to leave us, never to come back. But you shall not go until you have heard me, until we have made ourselves known to one another."

She took her friend's arm and led her into the next room. There she looked at her for a moment through eyes full of tears, and then clasped her in her arms and kissed her cheeks.

"I could not bear to leave you, dear, in any coldness: the remorse would be too hard. You may count on me always, as upon yourself. You

have been *great* to-night. I have felt that I was worthy of you, and I wish to prove it. I have sometimes been unkind to you, I have been in the wrong; forgive me, dear, for that. I disown now every word of mine that has ever hurt you; I wish to call back and cancel them all. Our hearts are brought near again by a common grief, and I do not know which of us is the most unhappy. M. de Montriveau was not here to-night —you know what that means? Nobody who has seen you at this ball, Clara, will ever forget you. For me, I make one more attempt; if that fails, I shall go into a convent! Tell me, where do you go?"

"Into Normandy—to Courcelles: there to love and to pray until the day comes when God takes me from this world. . . ." "M. de Rastignac!" she called, remembering that the young man waited near by.

The student advanced, and knelt to kiss his cousin's hand.

"Antoinette, good-bye!" continued the Vicomtesse. "May you be happy." She turned towards the student: "As for you," she said, "you are—are still young; you can find something to believe in yet. The happiness will have been mine, that is sometimes given to those who are privileged in their dying, to have had about me in the hour of my departure no feelings that were not reverent and sincere!"

It was about five o'clock when Rastignac came away. He had waited to see Madame de Beauséant into her travelling carriage, and had received her last good-bye. She was weeping then; and be it known by this token that persons occupying the highest positions in the world are not thereby placed beyond the laws which govern

human hearts, nor do they live a life secure from sorrow, as certain courtiers of the populace would have it believed. Eugène made his way back to the Maison Vauquer on foot through cold and wet weather. His education was complete.

"We shan't be able to save poor old Goriot," said Bianchon, as Rastignac entered his neighbour's room.

Eugène gazed for awhile at the old man as he lay asleep, and then turned to Bianchon. "My friend," he said, "go on your way, pursue the modest part in life to which you have limited your desires! For me, I am in Hell, and I must needs stay there now. Whatever evil you hear any man say about the World, be sure you believe him!—There is no Juvenal who could portray the horrors that are hidden under its jewels and its gold."

Rastignac was waked about two o'clock by Bianchon. The latter had to go out, so he wanted Eugène to look after Père Goriot, whose condition had grown worse in the course of the forenoon.

"The poor old chap has not two days to live, perhaps not six hours," said the medical student. "But for all that, we must continue to fight the disease. He will want to be seen to very carefully, and at some expense. As to nursing him, we can do that between us; but as to money—I haven't a sou. I have turned his pockets inside out, and ransacked his drawers: result, a blank. I questioned him during a conscious interval, and he told me he hasn't a farthing. What have you got?"

"I have only twenty francs left," answered Rastignac. "However, I shall go and play with them—I am sure to win."

"And if you lose?"

"I shall go and demand money from his sons-in-law and his daughters."

"And if they won't give you any?" continued Bianchon. "The most urgent need just now, however, is not to find money. What we want to do is to wrap the old man, from feet to mid-thigh, in a boiling hot mustard-plaster. If he cries out—good, he has still a shot in the locker! You know how to carry this out, and you will have Christophe to help you. Meanwhile I shall go round to the druggist's and will guarantee the payment of anything we may want to get from them on tick. It is a great pity the poor man couldn't be moved to our hospital: he would have been much better there. Well, come along now, and I will instal you in office; and you must not leave him till I come back."

The two young men went into the room where the old man was lying. When Eugène looked on his face—convulsed, livid, and utterly exhausted—he was dismayed by the change.

"Well, papa, how are you?" he said, leaning over the pallet-bed.

Goriot turned his dull eyes on Eugène, and looked at him very attentively, but did not recognise him. The sight was too much for the student, and his eyes filled with tears.

"Bianchon, don't you think we ought to have curtains put up to the windows?"

"No; he is not affected now by atmospheric conditions of any kind; it would be a good thing for him if he felt either hot or cold. All the same, we shall need a fire in order to make him nourishing broths, and to heat the things we shall want to use. I will send you round some sticks, they will do until we get logs. I burnt all yours,

and the whole of the poor man's turf-blocks during yesterday and last night. The weather was damp and the water was trickling down the walls; it was all I could do to get the place dry. I got Christophe to come and sweep the room out; it's a regular stable! I've been burning juniper to subdue the stink."

"My God!" said Rastignac, "and to think of his daughters!"

"Look here, if he wants to drink, give him some of this," said the house-student, pointing to a large white jar. "If he begins to groan and you find that the belly is hot and hard to the touch, you will get Christophe to help you, and administer—well, you understand. Should he chance to develop symptoms of excitement, should he talk a great deal, or should he show the least trace of delirium—don't be alarmed. That wouldn't be at all a bad sign; only, send Christophe to the Hospice Cochin, and either our doctor, who is a friend of mine, or I myself, will come and apply moxas. While you were asleep this morning we had a grand consultation with a pupil of Dr. Gall, our own House-Surgeon, and the head Physician from the Hôtel-Dieu. Those gentlemen considered that some of the symptoms were interesting and unusual, and we are going to observe the course of the malady very closely in the hope of being able to clear up several rather important scientific points. One of these gentlemen is of opinion that if the pressure of the serum is most marked at a point in the brain, then certain peculiar conditions will be established. Therefore, you must listen carefully, in case he begins to speak, so as to determine what class of ideas his talk pertains to: whether it is the faculty of memory, or penetration, or

judgment that is brought into play; whether he is absorbed in practical questions or in states of feeling, whether he is calculating the future, or whether his mind goes back upon the past—you must, in fact, be in a position to give us an exact report of everything. It is possible that the extravasation may inundate the whole brain; in which case he will die in the comatose condition that he is in at this moment. All sorts of queer things may happen in cases of this sort! If the bomb bursts here," said Bianchon, pointing to the occiput of the patient, "very singular things have been known to result: the brain recovers certain of its faculties, and death ensues more slowly. Or the serous matter may pass out of the brain altogether, travelling by routes which only a post-mortem can reveal. There is at the Incurables an old man, quite an imbecile, in whose case the effusion has followed the direction of the spinal column. He suffers horribly; but he lives."

"Did they enjoy themselves?" said Père Goriot, now recognising Eugène.

"Oh, he thinks of nothing but his daughters," said Bianchon. "He said to me more than a hundred times in the night, 'They are dancing now! She has got her dress.' He called them by their names. He made me cry, the devil take it, with those plaintive tones of his: 'Delphine! my little Delphine! Nasie!' On my honour," said the medical student, "it was enough to make anybody burst into tears."

"Delphine!" said the old man; "she is there, isn't she? I knew she was there."

And his eyes filling with a crazed animation, he looked eagerly about the room and then towards the door.

"I am going down to tell Sylvie to get ready the mustard plasters," exclaimed Bianchon; "now is the time to apply them!"

Left alone with the patient once more, Rastignac seated himself on the foot of the bed and looked into the face of the suffering old man. It was a sight that filled him with compassion and dismay.

"Madame de Beauséant hastens into banishment—and *he* is dying," he said. "It is impossible for beautiful natures to stay long in this world. What alliance, indeed, is possible between the noblest feelings of the human heart and a society so worthless, so petty, and so shallow!"

Pictures of the things he had seen at the ball re-formed themselves in his mind, and were in strange contrast to the spectacle of this death-bed. Bianchon suddenly reappeared.

"I say, Eugène, I have just seen our head Physician, and have come back running all the way. If the patient manifests any signs of reason, if he begins to talk, wrap him in a long plaster from the nape of the neck to the loins, and send round for us."

"Dear Bianchon," said Eugène.

"Oh! the case really concerns a most interesting point in medicine," interrupted the student, with all the ardour of a neophyte.

"So," said Eugène, "it would seem, then, that I am the only one who tends this poor old man for his own sake."

"You would not have said that if you had seen me this morning," answered Bianchon, without taking offence at the remark. "Doctors who have been long in practice see nothing but the

sickness ; but let me tell you, my dear boy, *I* can still see the sick man."

He withdrew, leaving Eugène alone again with the old man, and in grave apprehension lest a crisis should now occur ; which in fact it speedily did.

"Ah! it is you, my dear child," said Père Goriot, recognising Eugène.

"Do you feel any better?" asked the student, taking his hand.

"Yes; my head felt as if it was pressed in a vice, but the grip is slackened now. Have you seen my daughters? They'll be coming shortly, they will hasten to me as soon as they learn that I am unwell—ah! how they used to take care of me at the Rue de la Jussienne! Good Lord, I wish my room were in a fit condition to receive them! There was a young man here who has burnt all my blocks."

"I can hear Christophe on the stairs," said Eugène ; "he is bringing you up the logs which that young man has sent you."

"Good! But how are we to pay for the logs? I have not a sou, my dear. I have given away everything, everything. I am dependent on charity. At any rate, the ball-dress was beautiful, eh? (oh, the pain!) Thank you, Christophe! God will reward you, my boy; for me, I have nothing left."

"I shall pay you well, Christophe—you and Sylvie," said Eugène in the servant's ear.

"My daughters told you they were coming, didn't they, Christophe? Go to them again; I will give you five francs. Tell them that I am not feeling well, that I want to kiss them, to look on them, one time more before I die. Tell them

that, but so as not to frighten them more than you can help."

On receiving a sign from Eugène, Christophe went off on this errand.

"They are going to come," continued the old man. "*I* know them. That kind Delphine! if I were to die, what a grief it would be to her! And Nasie, too. I would like not to die, so as not to make them weep. To die, my good Eugène, is—not to see them any more. There, where I am going to, it will be very dreary for me. Hell, for a father, means being without his children, and I have been serving an apprenticeship in that since the day they were married. My Paradise was in the Rue de la Jussienne. Say then, if I go to Heaven, shall I be able to come back to the earth, and be about them as a spirit? I have heard talk of such things: is it true? I can see them now, just as they used to be in the Rue de la Jussienne. They would come down in the morning: 'Good morning, papa!' they would say. Then I would take them on my knees, and there would be such teasings and such tricks, and they would coax and make love to their father in such pretty ways! We had breakfast together every morning; and then we would dine—there! I was a father then, my children were mine to enjoy. While they were at the Rue de la Jussienne they did not think things out; they knew nothing about the world, but they loved me so much. Ah, God! why did they not remain little things always? (Oh, the pain!—my head is wrenched!) Oh, oh! Forgive me, children! I am in terrible pain; this must be suffering, indeed, for you have accustomed me to put up with pain! Ah, God! if only I had their hands in mine, I should not

feel this trouble any longer. Do you think they are coming? Christophe is so stupid; I ought to have gone myself. *He* is going to have a sight of them, Christophe is. Well, you were at the ball, last night—tell me, how were they looking? They had no idea I was ill, had they?—else they would never have danced, poor little things. Oh, I don't want to be ill any more—they still have too much need of my help. Their fortunes are in jeopardy; and then, such husbands as they have been delivered up to! Make me well! Make me well! (Ah! how I suffer! . . . Oh! oh!) Look you, I must get well; for they are in need of money, and I know where to go and get it. I shall go and make vermicelli at Odessa. I am a sharp hand, I shall make millions of money (Oh! this is more than I can bear!)"

Goriot was silent for a moment: he seemed to be summoning all his strength to help him to endure.

"If they were here, I should not complain," he said; "what cause would I have to complain then?"

A slight drowsiness now intervened, and lasted for a long time.

Christophe by-and-bye returned, and was permitted by Rastignac, who supposed that Père Goriot was sound asleep, to talk aloud about the result of his message.

"Sir," he said; "I first went to Madame la Comtesse. I could not get to speak to her, because she was engaged with her husband on important business. When I insisted on seeing her, M. de Restaud himself came out, and spoke to me like this: 'M. Goriot is dying, is he? Very well, it is the best thing he can do. I need

Madame de Restaud's presence, to conclude some important matters of business. When they are settled, she shall come!' He seemed a very angry gentleman, that. I was making my way out, when Madame entered the ante-chamber through a doorway that I had not noticed, and said to me: 'Christophe, tell my father that I am in the midst of a discussion with my husband, and that I cannot leave the house till it is settled: the life or death of my children hangs upon it. But as soon as this is finished, I shall come at once.' As to Madame la Baronne, it was quite another story there! I have neither seen her, nor been able to let her know. 'Oh,' says her waiting-woman, 'Madame only got back from the ball at a quarter-past five, and she is asleep now. If I wake her before noon, she will be cross. When she rings for me, I shall tell her that her father is worse. It is always early enough to tell her bad news.' I begged and prayed, but it was no use! I asked to see M. le Baron; but he was gone out."

"What, not one of his daughters is coming!" cried Rastignac. "I shall write to them both, this instant."

"*Not one!*" echoed the old man, sitting upright in bed. "They are busy; they are asleep; they will not come. I knew it! You have to die, in order to know what your children are. . . Ah, my friend, see you never marry, never have any children. For you give them life, and they give you death—you bring them into the world, and they hound you out of it. No, they will not come!—I have known that these ten years. I have sometimes told myself that it was so, but I have never had the courage to believe it."

In each of his eyes gathered a great tear,

which hung in the red eye-socket, but did not overflow or fall.

"Ah! if I were rich—if I had kept hold of my fortune—if I had not given it all to them—then they would be here now, fawning on me; they would lick my cheeks with their kisses! I should be dwelling in a mansion, and there would be beautiful rooms for me, and servants, and a fire to keep me warm; and they would all be beside me now, and all in tears, they and their husbands and their children. Yes, I should have all that. But now—nothing at all! It is money that gives everything; it even gives you daughters. Oh, my money, where is my money? If I had treasures to leave behind, they would watch over me, they would tend me at every hand. I should hear their voices then, I should see them with my eyes. Ah, my dear child, my only child, I would rather be forsaken as I am, and poor! When one who is unfortunate and poor is loved, at least it is certain that the love is true. No, no; I would like to be rich, for then I should see them. And yet, who knows? They have hearts of stone, both of them. My love for them has been too great, it was impossible they should have any love for me. A father ought to be always rich: and he ought to keep his children tightly in hand, like rogue horses. I was always on my knees before them. The wretches! it is their crowning act, it is worthy of all they have done to me during the last ten years. If you only knew what a fuss they made of me when they were first married (Oh! this is a cruel martyrdom!) You see, I had just given each of them nearly eight hundred thousand francs, so neither they, nor yet their husbands, could well be uncivil to me then. I was a welcome guest at their houses then: it

was: 'My kind father' here, and 'My dear father' there. A cover was always laid for me then. Yes, I dined with their husbands, who treated me with every respect. You see, I had the look, to them, of a man who had a little in reserve yet. Why was that? I had said nothing about my affairs; but a man who gives eight hundred thousand francs to each of his daughters is a man worth showing some attention to. Well, they showed a great deal, but it was all for my money. That world of high life is not a beautiful world, though they call it so: I saw that at once. They used to take me with them to the theatre, driving in a carriage: and at their evening parties I could stay as long as I liked. In a word, they called themselves my daughters, and they acknowledged me as their father. But I have my own feelings, my own discernment; and, I tell you, nothing escaped me. Every word and look reached its mark—buried itself in my heart again and again. I saw quite well that it was all pretence and make-believe; but there was no help for it now, the evil was done, and past cure. I was less at home at their tables than I have felt at the dinner-table downstairs. I did not know how to speak as one should. So I would hear some of these people of high life ask my sons-in-law in a low tone, 'Who may that gentleman be?' And they would answer, '*That's* the father with the money-bags—he's got such a lot.' 'The deuce he has!' they would say; and then they would look at me with the respect due to the money. And if I was sometimes a little in their way, well, I paid dearly for my mistakes. Besides, who is there that is perfect? (My head is one sore!) Dear Monsieur Eugène, I am suffering at this moment what one must suffer in the

passage of death. . . and yet, I tell you, it is as nothing compared to the pain I endured the first time Anastasie gave me a look that told me I had just said something stupid, and humiliated her. It was a look that laid all my veins open! I should have liked to know about things more, to know everything; but only one thing I knew too well, that I was not wanted in the world. Next day I went to Delphine for consolation, and there I at once fell into some blunder which made her angry. I almost went out of my mind. For eight days I could not think what next to do; I feared to call on them and again meet their reproaches—and in that way it was that my daughters turned me to the door. O God! since Thou knowest all the misery and sorrows that I have endured—since Thou hast taken count of all the stabbings, blow on blow, that have been dealt me in these years that have made me an aged man, and whitened my hairs, and killed my life. . . why, then, dost Thou cause me to suffer to-day? Surely I have expiated in full the sin of loving them too well: they have themselves exacted vengeance for my affection, they have been the executioners of my torture. Ah, well! but fathers are such fools: I loved them so, that I went back to them, as the gambler goes back to his gaming-table. My daughters were *my* vice—*my* mistresses—my whole world to me! Both of them were in need of something; dresses, or what not. And their women told me, and I gave them what they needed, that I might be welcomed by them again! But they did not do it without reading me some little lectures on my way of behaving in company—Oh, they did not even wait till next day for that! They were beginning to be ashamed of me: *that* is what you

get for giving your children a good education. And I could not go back to school at my time of life. (Oh God! I suffer terribly. The doctors! where are the doctors! If they would only open my head, it would ease the pain!) My daughters, my daughters! Anastasie! Delphine! I want to *see* them—send for them, send the gendarmerie and have them brought by force! Justice is on my side, the whole world is on my side, the law of nature, and the Civil Code—they are all for me. I protest against it! Our country will perish if fathers are trampled under foot. Everybody must see *that.* On Fatherhood the whole world is founded, all Society revolves on that, and everything must crumble into ruins if children love their fathers no more. Oh! to see them before me, to hear them speak—let them say to me what they will, if only I could hear their voices, *that* would assuage my suffering. Delphine! especially Delphine! But tell them, when they come, not to look at me so coldly as they do. Ah, my kind friend! you do not know, Monsieur Eugène, what it is to find the warm golden look in the eyes you love suddenly changed to leaden grey. Since the sunlight of their eyes ceased to fall kindly on me, it has always been winter for me here. I have had nothing but sorrows for sustenance, and of these I have eaten to the full. My part in life has been, to be humiliated, to be insulted; and for that alone I have lived. I loved them so much that I swallowed down all their affronts, the price for which they sold me my poor little stealthy enjoyments. To think of a father having to stand in hiding that he might look on his own daughters! I have given my whole life to them; they will not give me a single hour of theirs to-day!

I hunger and I thirst for them, and my heart is burning within me, but yet they will not come to bring relief to my death-agony. For I am dying now, I know I am dying. But they do not know what a thing it is, to walk over the dead body of a father thus! There is a God in heaven; and He will take vengeance for us, whether we wish it or no, we fathers. Oh, but they will come! Come, my dear ones, come, and kiss me once more, one last kiss more, to make the viaticum of your father—who will pray to God for you—who will plead for you—and will tell Him that you have been always kind daughters to me! After all, you are not to blame. They are not to blame, my friend—see that you say that clearly to everybody, lest people should trouble them on my account. It is my own fault altogether. I made the custom for them, taught them to trample on me always. I loved to have it so, that was my nature. The thing concerns nobody but myself: no laws, whether of God or man, have any right to interfere. God would be acting unjustly if he condemned them because of what has happened to me. I did not know how to act properly, and I committed the folly of abdicating, surrendering all my rights. I would have done myself any dishonour, humiliated myself to any degree for them. What, then, could you expect? The best natural dispositions, the most generous and beautiful souls, would have been spoilt thus, would have been corrupted by a father so pliable and indulgent. I am a wretch, and am justly punished: I alone have been the cause of all my daughters' transgressions. I spoilt them; and so they crave after pleasure to-day as they craved sweetmeats when they were little girls. Think of it—they had a car-

riage of their own at fifteen. Nothing was denied them, nobody stood in their way in anything. It is I alone who am in fault, but my fault was love. My heart used to open up at the sound of their voices. Oh, I hear them now! they are coming! Yes, yes, they will come. The Law commands that children shall come and be by their father's death-bed: the Law is on my side. Besides, it will only be the cost of a cab-drive to them: I shall pay for that. Write and tell them that I have millions to leave them! I have—on my word of honour. I am going to set up the manufacture of Italian pasties at Odessa. I know all about the process. There are millions of money to be made on my plan, and nobody has ever thought of it. You see, those goods will not waste in transport, as wheat and flour always do. Ah, ha! starch is the thing, there are millions of money in that, too! Tell them that—you won't be telling a lie—tell them that there are millions; and even if it is only greed brings them, I would rather be deceived so: for I shall see them. I want my daughters! *I* made them, they are mine, mine!" he exclaimed, sitting bolt upright. Eugène gazed in dismay at that startled head with its dishevelled white hair, and that face that expressed a menace in every feature from which menace could speak.

"Come," said Eugène, "lie down now, my good Père Goriot, and I shall write to them now. And as soon as Bianchon returns, I shall go and find them, if they do not come before then."

"If they do not come?" repeated the old man, sobbing. "But I shall have died—shall have died in a fit of rage, of rage! I tell you, rage is getting the better of me! At this moment I can see the whole course of my life—and I have been

cheated! They do not love me, they have never loved me at all! That is plain to see. If they have not come already, they will not come now. The longer they put off coming, the easier for them in the end to deny me this joy altogether. I know what they are. It has never been a gift of theirs to guess at my disappointments, my sorrows, or my needs; and just as little will they guess now without being told that I am dying here. They do not even divine the secret of my love for them. Yes, yes, I see it all! It has been so much my way to lay my very entrails open for their sakes, that at last whatever I could do for them became valueless, a nothing at all. If they had wished to pluck the eyes out of my head, I should have said 'Pluck them out, then!' I have been too utter a fool; and they have fancied that everybody-else's father did just like theirs. A man should always see that people know his value, and value him. But *their* children will take vengeance of them for me—why, it is in their own interest that they should come here at once! Warn them of this, tell them that they are increasing the agony, each of them, of her own death-bed. In this one crime they are committing all the crimes that there can be. . . . Go then, do go, and tell them, that it will be *parricide* if they do not come! They have been guilty of sins enough without adding this one. Cry out to them, as I do now, 'Hi, Nasie! Hi, Delphine! Come here to your father who has been so kind to you, and who is lying in pain now!' What, not a word—*nobody answers!* Am I to die like a dog then? *That* is my reward: to be left to die, to be forsaken. They are wretches, those women, they are criminals: I loathe them, I curse them! I shall come out of

my coffin in the night, and rise again to curse them, still to curse them—for, my friends, I am doing no wrong, am I?—they have treated me badly, have they not? . . . What am I saying? Did you not tell me just now that Delphine was here? She is kinder than her sister. . . . You are my son, Eugène, my son! Love her, be a father to her, you. The other is very unhappy. And then, there is that about their fortunes. Ah, God! I am dying—this pain is too much to bear! Cut my head off, leave me nothing but a heart. . . ."

"Christophe, go and fetch Bianchon!" cried Eugène, frightened at the old man's painful moanings and the strange character of his outcries. "And bring me a cab as you return.—I am going for your daughters, my good Père Goriot; I shall bring them to you."

"Force them to come! Force them to come! Call out the Civil Guard, the Troops of the Line; everything, everything!" he cried, casting upon Eugène his last look in which there shone any light of reason. "Tell the Government, the Procureur du Roi, to have them brought to me —I want them!"

"But you have cursed them."

"Who said that?" answered the old man, with a stupefied look. "You know quite well that I love them, I worship them! I should be quite well again, if only I could see them. . . . Go, my good neighbour, my dear child, go for them! *You* are kind, indeed you are. I wish I could thank you, only I have nothing I can give you but the blessings of a dying man. Oh, I would like to see Delphine, at least, to ask her to repay you for me. If the other cannot come, at least bring Delphine to me. Tell her that you will not

love her any more if she does not come. She loves you so much, she will come for that. Something to drink! my bowels are on fire! Put something on my head—oh! if my daughters' hands were placed there, my life would be saved, I know it would. *Mon Dieu!* who will restore their fortunes if I die now? I want to go to Odessa for them; to Odessa, to make pasties."

"Drink this," said Eugène. He raised Père Goriot and supported him on his left arm, while with the right hand he held a cup of tisane to the dying man's lips.

"How you must love *your* father and mother!" said the old man, feebly pressing Eugène's hand in both of his, from which all the strength was quickly going. "Do you understand that I am going to die without seeing them, my own daughters? To be always thirsty, and never allowed to drink, *that* is what my life has been for ten years past. . . My two sons-in-law have killed my daughters: yes, I had no daughters any more from the day they were married. All you that are fathers, demand of the Chamber that there be a law made against marriages! At least, if you love your daughters, do not let them marry. A son-in-law is a scoundrel who spoils and corrupts everything in your daughter, contaminates her utterly. No more marriages, I say! That is what robs us of our daughters, and then, when we lie dying, they are not beside us. There must be law, also, for dying fathers. Why, it is a frightful thing, this! I call for vengeance! My sons-in-law will not let them come. . . Kill them! . . . Death to Restaud! Death to the Alsatian! They have murdered me! . . . Death, or my daughters! . . . Ah! it is finished now, I am dying. . . dying without them. . . . them. . .

Nasie! Fifine! Come then, do come! Your papa is going. . ."

"My good Père Goriot, calm yourself, do! Lie quite still, and don't disturb your mind so—don't think at all."

"But not to see them—it is agony!"

"You shall see them."

"Really?" cried the old man, with a crazy animation. "Oh, just to see them! I am to see them, to hear their voices. I shall die happy. Ah, yes indeed, I do not want to live any longer now—I do not care about it—for my pains grow and grow. But to see them, to touch their dresses—ah! nothing but their dresses, that is very little — let me only feel something that is of themselves — only touch their hair. . . their hair. . ."

His head sank suddenly back on the pillow, as though he had been felled by a bludgeon. His feeble hands moved gropingly over the coverlet, as if seeking to touch his daughters' hair.

"I bless them," he said, making an effort; "I bless. . ."

His little remaining strength suddenly gave out. At this moment Bianchon entered the room.

"I met Christophe," he said. "He is bringing you a cab."

He looked at the sick man, and lifted the eyelids with his finger. The two students gazed into the eyes beneath; they were without life or lustre now.

"He won't recover consciousness," said Bianchon. "At least, I think not."

He left the old man's pulse, and laid a hand over his heart.

"The machinery still works—more's the pity,

seeing the state he is in. It would be better for him to die."

"Yes, indeed!" said Rastignac.

"What is the matter with *you?* You are as white as death."

"My friend, I have just now been listening to such moans of pain, such outcries of grief—ah! there is a God in Heaven! Yes, there is a God, and he has made a better world for us, else is our life on earth a phantasm, a mockery of reason. I might have cried like a child, but it is too tragic for tears—my heart, my very vitals, seem clasped in a vice!"

"I say, though; we shall want a lot of things presently. Where are we to get the money?"

Rastignac took out his watch.

"Take this, and pawn it at once. I don't want to stop on the way, myself—I am afraid of losing a minute after Christophe returns. I have not got a farthing, and shall have to pay my cab-fare when I get back here."

Rastignac rushed down the stairs, and set out at once for the Rue de Helder. As he drove through Paris, his imagination was still haunted by the cruel scene which he had just witnessed, and his heart grew hot with anger. But on reaching the ante-chamber, and asking for Madame de Restaud, he was told that Madame could see no one just now.

"But," he explained to the valet-de-chambre, "I have come to her from her father—he is dying."

"Sir, M. le Comte has given the strictest orders. . ."

"If it is M. de Restaud who has given these orders, tell him that his father-in-law is dying, and say that I wish to see him at once."

The man withdrew. Eugène waited a long time for the reply.

"Perhaps he is dying at this very instant," he said to himself.

The man returned, and conducted Eugène into the first salon. M. de Restaud stood before the fireless grate to receive the student; nor did he ask him to be seated.

"Monsieur le Comte," said Eugène, "M. Goriot, your father-in-law, is dying in a squalid den of a lodging, without even a farthing to buy firewood. He is now on the very brink of the grave, and calls for his daughter to come to. . ."

"Sir," said the Comte de Restaud, coldly, "I have very little affection for M. Goriot, as you have had a chance of seeing for yourself. He has compromised his character by his dealings with Madame de Restaud. All my misfortunes are due to him, and I regard him as the enemy of my peace. Whether he lives or dies is a matter of complete indifference to me. That, then, is how I regard M. Goriot. The world is at liberty to blame me for this attitude, but I care nothing whatever for its opinion. And the matters which I am at present engaged upon, and must carry through, are of too important a nature for me to give a moment's consideration to what is going to be thought of me by fools and outsiders. As for Madame de Restaud, she is not in a state to go abroad now. Besides, it is my will that she shall not leave the house. You may tell her father that as soon as she shall have discharged her duty towards me and my child, she will come and see him. If she has any love for her father, she may be free to go in a few seconds if she likes. . ."

"Monsieur le Comte, it does not belong to me to judge your action; you are the master of your own wife. But I wish to know whether you will act honourably by me? I only ask you to promise me that you will tell her that her father has not a day to live, and that already he has cursed her because she is not by his side."

"You may tell her yourself," said M. de Restaud; for he was not untouched by the thrill of indignation in Eugène's voice.

The Comte led the way into the room in which the Comtesse usually received. She was bathed in tears, and was sunk in an arm-chair; her whole aspect was that of a woman who wished to die. The sight moved Rastignac to pity. Before venturing to look at him, she glanced towards her husband with an expression of subjection and fear which told its own tale. She was in complete prostration; her strength seemed to have been broken, crushed out, under the action of a tyranny both physical and mental. The Comte gave a jerk of his head: she took this as a sign that she might speak.

"Sir, I have heard all that you have said. Say to my father that if he knew what I am passing through, he would forgive me. . . I never thought to know such torture as this—it is more than I can bear, Monsieur! But I shall resist to the end," she said, addressing her husband; "I am a mother.—Tell my father," she said to the student, in tones of utter grief—"tell my father that, whatever the appearances may be, I am not to blame, I am sinless towards him!"

Eugène took leave of the husband and wife, and withdrew in a kind of stupefaction. He divined the terrible nature of the ordeal which the woman was passing through. It was clear

enough that Anastasie was not a free agent, and the tone of M. de Restaud had left him in no doubt as to the futility of his errand. He hastened to Madame de Nucingen's, and found her in bed.

"I am very ill, my poor dear," she said. "I caught a cold returning from the ball, and I am afraid it may be inflammation of the lungs. I am waiting for the doctor now."

"If you were on the brink of the grave," said Eugène, interrupting her, "you would have to be dragged, carried somehow, back with me into your father's presence. He is calling for you! If you could but hear even the least painful of his cries you would think nothing at all of your own sickness any more."

"My father may not be so ill, Eugène, as you say he is. But it would grieve my heart if I seemed to you to be acting wrongly; so I will do just what you want me to. As for my father, I know he would die of grief if I met my death through going out now, when I am so unwell. Never mind, I shall go as soon as the doctor has been. Ah! why are you not wearing your watch?" she asked, suddenly missing the chain.

Eugène flushed.

"Eugène, Eugène, if you have already sold it, lost it—oh, it would be too unkind of you!"

The student bent over Delphine, and said in her ear:—

"You wish to know what I have done with it? Well, you shall know! Your father has not wherewith to buy the winding-sheet which they will wrap him in to-night. Your watch has gone to the pawnbroker's; I had nothing else."

Delphine sprang suddenly out of bed, ran to her desk, and took out her purse. She handed

it to Rastignac and rang the bell, exclaiming:—"I shall go to him—I shall go, Eugène! leave me while I dress. Why, I should be a monster if. . . Go now, I shall arrive before you!—Thérèse," she called to her waiting-woman, "tell M. de Nucingen to come at once—say I want to speak to him."

Eugène was almost light-hearted when he reached the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, such happiness there was in being able to tell the dying man that one of his daughters was on her way to him. He examined the contents of the purse, that he might pay his cabman at once. The purse of this young woman, so wealthy and fashionable, contained but seventy francs in all. Having mounted to the top of the house, he found Père Goriot supported in the arms of Bianchon, while the surgeon from the hospital was at work upon him, under the direction of the Chief Physician. They were applying moxas to his back—the last resource of science, and a remedy tried in vain.

"Do you feel them?" asked the Physician.

Père Goriot had caught sight of the student, and replied—

"They are coming, are they not?"

"He might pull out of it yet," said the surgeon. "He can talk now."

"Yes," said Eugène, in reply to the old man; "Delphine is coming close behind me."

"Oh, he was only talking of his daughters—that is nothing," said Bianchon. "He cries out for them all the time, as they say that a man dying by empalement cries out for water; so . ."

"You may give up," said the Physician to the surgeon. "There is nothing more to be done with the case. We can't save him."

Bianchon and the surgeon replaced the dying man at full length on his infected bed.

"The sheets ought to be changed, however," said the Physician. "Though there is no hope of his life, some respect is still due to his human nature. I shall come back, Bianchon," he said to the student. "If he still shows signs of pain, apply opium to the diaphragm."

The Physician and the surgeon then withdrew.

"Now then, Eugène, my boy! courage is the word," said Bianchon, as soon as they were alone. "We must now set about putting him into a clean shirt and changing his bed. Go and tell Sylvie to bring up some sheets, and to come and lend us a hand."

Eugène went downstairs, and found Sylvie helping Madame Vauquer to lay the table. As soon as the widow heard his first words to the maid, she came towards him with the peevish smile of vinegared sweetness that belongs to the shopkeeper who is afraid she may lose her money, yet does not want to offend a customer.

"My dear Monsieur Eugène," she said, "you know as well as I do that Père Goriot hasn't a halfpenny in the world. To give clean sheets to a man who may turn up his eyes at any moment is as good as losing them altogether; one of them, at any rate, would *have* to be parted with, to wind him in. Besides, you already owe me a hundred and forty-four francs. Add forty francs for the sheets; then there are some other little things—besides the candle that Sylvie will give you—and it comes altogether to at least two hundred francs, which is more than a poor widow like me can afford to lose. Lord, now, Monsieur Eugène, don't be unfair. I have lost enough already during the last five days, since

bad luck came to live here. I would rather than ten crowns that the old man had moved out days ago, as you said he would. It has a bad effect on my boarders—it would not need much to make me have him taken off to the hospital even now. Come now, just put yourself in my place! I must consider my establishment before everything; it is my life, my only livelihood."

Eugène re-mounted quickly to Goriot's room.

"Bianchon, where's the money for the watch?"

"On the table there, or what remains of it—three hundred and sixty odd francs. I have paid, out of the proceeds, for the things we have had to get on trust thus far. The ticket is lying under the coin."

Rastignac sprang downstairs. "Here you are, Madame," he said with disgust. "Let us settle our accounts now. M. Goriot has not long to stay with you, and I. . ."

"Yes, he'll be going out feet foremost, poor old man," said Madame Vauquer, as she counted over the two hundred francs with an expression half jubilant and half melancholy.

"Let us finish this matter," said Rastignac.

"Sylvie, serve out the sheets and go upstairs and help these gentlemen.—You won't forget Sylvie, will you?" she said in Eugène's ear: "She has been up these two nights."

As soon as his back was turned, the old woman hurried to speak to her cook.

"Give him the worn sheets that have been 'turned,' No. 7. Lord! they're good enough, anyhow, for a dead-un," she said in Sylvie's ear.

Eugène was already some way up the stairs, and did not hear these observations of the landlady.

"Now then," said Bianchon, "let's put on his shirt. You hold him up."

Eugène went to the head of the bed and held up the dying man, while Bianchon removed his shirt. The old man now made a clutch at his own breast as if he would guard something there, and uttered the while some plaintive, inarticulate, low cries, like a dumb animal trying to express a great sorrow.

"Ah, I know what he wants!" said Bianchon. "It's the little hair chain with the gold medallion locket that we took away a while ago when we were going to apply the moxas. We must give it him back, poor old man. There it is on the mantelpiece."

Eugène went and picked up the chain. It was woven from a tress of very pale blonde hair, doubtless Madame Goriot's. On the one side of the medallion he read the name ANASTASIE, and on the other DELPHINE. It was the symbol of his own heart, and so upon his heart it had always rested. The tresses within the locket were of hair so fine that they must have been taken from the little heads while his daughters were still in their first childhood. When the medallion touched the old man's breast again, he uttered a long, deep-drawn sound, a sigh or a pant of relief, that expressed the satisfaction of an utter craving of his nature. It seemed the last dying call of his consciousness as it slowly withdrew towards that unknown inward centre from which all our sympathies take their rise, and to which they travel in the souls of others. An expression of livid and deathly joy lit up the poor convulsed face; and the sight of this terrific and rending stress of affection still living on when thought was dead, so overcame the two students

that they could not restrain their tears. The dying man felt their hot drops fall on him, and gave a shrill cry of delight.

"Nasie! Fifine!" he said.

"There is still some life in him," said Bianchon.

"What can he do with that?" asked Sylvie.

"Suffer," replied Rastignac.

Bianchon signed to his neighbour to do as he did, and then knelt down and passed his arms under the dying man's hips; Eugène knelt on the other side, and passed his arms under the back —and so they raised him, while Sylvie, who stood ready to do her part, quickly withdrew the lower sheet, and replaced it by one of those she had brought. That Goriot had felt those tears, and been deceived by them, was now clear. For he gathered all his remaining strength to stretch out his arms to either side of the bed; at last his hands reached the heads of the two young men; he clutched their hair with a kind of passion; and then there came the sound of a feeble voice:—

"Ah! My angels!"

Two words, two murmurs syllabled by the soul, which fled in giving voice to them.

"The poor dear man!" said Sylvie tenderly, quite overcome by this exclamation, this expression of a sovereign and undying love, which owed to a ghastly but unmeant deceit its last flush of exaltation, its last triumph over life.

Yes, this father's last sigh could not but be a sigh of joy; for in such a sigh only could all his life be gathered up, and thus was he mistaken, deceived to the last. Very reverently did they lay Père Goriot down again upon that pallet-bed of his. From this moment his features wore no

expression save that fixed look of suffering which betokened the life-and-death struggle going on within the machine of the body, now dissevered, as it was, from those cerebral functions on which depend man's consciousness of pleasure or of pain. It was only a question of time, and the mechanism itself would be broken up.

"He will remain in this condition for some hours, and will die without our noticing it. There won't even be any death-rattle. The brain must be completely swamped."

As he spoke they heard footsteps on the staircase, and saw a young woman come forward, in haste and panting.

"She comes too late," said Rastignac.

But it was not Delphine; it was Thérèse, her maid.

"Monsieur Eugène," she said, "Monsieur and Madame have had such a terrible scene, about some money that poor Madame wanted for her father. She swooned, and the doctor came, and she had to be bled; and all the time she kept crying, 'My father is dying, I want to see papa!' Oh, her cries were enough to break your heart. . ."

"That will do, Thérèse. If she came now, it would be to no purpose. M. Goriot can no longer recognise anyone."

"Poor dear gentleman, is he so ill as that?" said Thérèse.

"You've no more use for me, so I must go and look after the dinner. It is half-past four now," said Sylvie; and on leaving the room she nearly collided with Madame de Restaud on the landing.

There was something solemn and terrible in this abrupt apparition of the Comtesse just then. She looked toward that bed of death, dimly seen

in the light shed by a single candle. Her tears began to flow as she caught sight of the set face of her father, in which the last faint quiverings of life were scarce discernible. Bianchon considerately withdrew.

"I have escaped too late," said the Comtesse to Rastignac.

The student answered "Yes" by an inclination of the head that expressed also his own sorrow. Madame de Restaud took her father's hand and kissed it.

"Forgive me, my father! You used to say that my voice would call you back from the grave —come back, then, to life one moment, to bless your daughter who repents! Oh, hear me! This is frightful for me. Henceforth I can hope for no one's blessing but yours. Everybody hates me, you alone care for me. Even my own children will hate me in the future. Oh, take me with you — I shall love you — I shall nurse and care for you. . . . He does not hear me. . . I am mad. . ."

She fell on her knees, and gazed with a wild and crazed look on the poor wreck that lay before her.

"Nothing is wanting, now, to complete my misfortunes and my wretchedness," she said, turning her eyes toward Eugène. "M. de Trailles has gone off, leaving enormous debts behind him; and I have found out that he was deceiving me. My husband will never forgive me, and I have had to make over all my fortune to him. I have lost all my illusions. Alas! for whom is it that I have forsaken the only heart" —and she pointed to where her father lay—"that ever loved me truly? I have disowned him, and slighted him before the world, and rewarded his

affection with rebuffs, and done him a thousand harms, wretch that I am!"

"He knew it," said Rastignac.

As Eugène spoke these words, Père Goriot's eyelids unclosed, but this was only due to a muscular twitch of the body. The startled gesture of the Comtesse betrayed a sudden and awful hope, which was not less terrible to look upon than those eyes of the dying man.

"Is it possible he hears me, do you think?" she said eagerly. "Ah, no!" she murmured to herself, and sat down beside the bed. As she evidently wished to stay beside her father, Eugène now went downstairs to take a little food. The boarders were already assembled in the dining-room.

"Well," said the painter, as Eugène joined them, "so it seems we are going to have a little death*orama* upstairs?"

"I think, Charles," replied Eugène, "you ought to joke on some less melancholy subject."

"What! we're not to be allowed to laugh in this house henceforward, are we?" retorted the painter. "Where is the harm in it, seeing that Bianchon says the old chap's senses have quite gone?"

"In that case," said the Museum official, "he will have died as he lived."

"*My father is dead!*" shrieked the Comtesse.

At this terrible cry, Sylvie, Rastignac, and Bianchon hurried upstairs, and found Madame de Restaud in a swoon. When they had managed to bring her round, they carried her downstairs and put her in the cab (which was still waiting), in the charge of Thérèse, whom he told to take her to Madame de Nucingen's.

"Yes, he is dead, right enough," said Bianchon, on coming downstairs.

"Now, gentlemen, come to the table!" said Madame Vauquer. "The soup is getting cold."

The two students seated themselves side by side.

"What has got to be done now?" Eugène asked his friend.

"Well, I have closed his eyelids, and laid him out a little decently. We shall next have to go to the Mairie and notify the death; and when the medical officer there has accepted the certification, the body will have to be sewn in a shroud. And then there's the burial. How do you think that should be arranged?"

"He'll never sniff another bit of bread—this way," said one of the boarders, imitating the action and look of the old man.

"Damn it all, gentlemen!" said the tutor, "let go of your Père Goriot. We've feasted on that dish quite enough, and have had him served up with every kind of sauce for the past hour. One of the privileges of existence in the good town of Paris is just this, that you may be born here and live here and die here without anybody noticing what you are doing at any stage. Let us not forego, then, the advantages of civilisation at this table. Sixty people have died to-day as usual—are you going to stand, then, and pour your tears for the hecatombs of Paris? If old Goriot has burst up, so much the better for him! If he is an object of worship to you, then keep him to yourselves, and allow us others to eat our dinners in peace."

"Ah, yes!" said the widow, "it's all the better for him that he is dead. It looks as if the poor man had had a great deal to vex him in this life."

And this was the sole funeral oration pronounced over him who had been for Eugène the symbol and embodiment of Fatherhood.

The fifteen boarders settled down to their ordinary conversation. Eugène and Bianchon were glad to come away as soon as they had satisfied their hunger; for the hubbub of forks and spoons, and the laughter and loud talk, and the sight of those faces, with their varying degrees and expressions of gluttony and callousness, and the complete indifference to everything but themselves which was their mark in common—all went to inspire the young students with a sense of horror and disgust. They went out to procure a priest who should watch and pray beside the dead all night. They had no choice but to regulate by the small sum of money at their disposal the extent and expenses of the last duties they should render to the old man's remains. About nine in the evening the body was placed on the bare cross-webbing of the bed-frame; a candle was placed on either side, and a priest came to sit with the dead in that stripped and desolate room. Before going to bed, Rastignac questioned the priest as to the clergy charges and the scale of rates for funerals, and then wrote a few words to the Baron de Nucingen and the Comte de Restaud, requesting that they would send their men of business to arrange for defraying the expenses of their father-in-law's interment. He sent Christophe with these notes, and then lay down and slept the sleep of utter fatigue.

On the following morning, Bianchon and Rastignac had to go to the Mairie themselves and register the death of Goriot: the formalities were not over till towards twelve o'clock. Two hours later there was still no word from either of the

sons-in-law. They had sent neither money nor anyone to act for them, so that Rastignac had already had to put his hand in his pocket for the priest's fee. As Sylvie, moreover, had asked to be paid ten francs for shrouding the old man and sewing up his winding-sheet, Eugène and Bianchon found, upon calculating their resources, that if the relatives refused to have anything to do with this business, there would hardly be enough in hand to pay for the funeral. And so it was that Bianchon placed the dead body in a pauper's coffin—a pauper's coffin bought at the student's own charges, and brought round from the hospital, whence he had been able to procure it at a reduced rate.

"You ought to play a trick and have it out with those fellows," he said to Eugène. "Go and rent a grave, for five years' tenure, in Père-Lachaise, and order a service of the third-class from the Church, and the Pompes Funèbres.* Then if neither the sons-in-law nor the daughters will pay you back, have an inscription cut on the headstone, like this:—'*Here lies the Body of M. Goriot, Father of the Comtesse de Restaud and of the Baronne de Nucingen, Buried at the Expense of Two Students.*'"

But before acting on his friend's advice, Eugène went to call upon M. and Madame de

*A line or two from Baedeker will explain. "*A Concession Trentaire*, providing that the grave shall remain undisturbed for 30 years, costs 300 francs; a *Concession Temporaire*, for 5 years costs 50 francs; a *Concession à perpetuité*, or private burial place, may be secured for 1,000 francs. . . . All burials within the Department of the Seine are undertaken by the Compagnie des Pompes Funèbres, whose charges are regulated by tariff, varying from 3 francs to 7,184 francs, exclusive of the price of the coffin and the fees of the officiating clergyman." The figures here quoted are of course, those of to-day."—Tr

Nucingen and M. and Madame de Restaud. It was in each case a fruitless journey, and he got no further than the door. At both houses the porters had received the strictest orders with regard to visitors.

"Monsieur and Madame," they said, "cannot consent to see anyone. Their father is dead, and they are plunged in the deepest grief."

Eugène's experience of Parisian life was sufficient to make him recognise in this case that nothing would be gained by trying to press the matter. Nevertheless he felt a strange tightening of the heart at finding himself thus powerless to gain access to Delphine.

"Sell one of your ornaments"—he hastily wrote in the porter's room—"so that your father may be taken to his last resting-place in a decent manner."

He sealed this note, and asked the Baron's porter to give it to Thérèse, who would take it to her mistress: but the porter gave it to the Baron de Nucingen, who threw it in the fire.

When he had finished seeing to all the matters he had in hand, Eugène came back to the boarding-house about three o'clock. As he drew near to the house, tears came into his eyes in spite of himself. For there he beheld, on the pavement by the gate, a coffin supported on two chairs for trestles, and barely covered by a scantling of black cloth. In a copper bowl which had been silvered over lay a poor, mean tag of an aspergillus, soaking in the holy water. No passer-by had touched it yet to sprinkle a blessing on the dead; the street was as empty as the desert. Not even the gateway where the coffin stood was draped with a rag of mourning cloth. *This* death was that of the very poor—of one for whom

there was no ceremonial grief, nor any friends, nor kindred of his own to follow his body to the grave.

Eugène found that Bianchon had been unable to remain away from his hospital, but had left a note to let him know the arrangements he had made in regard to clergy. The house-student said he had found that a mass was beyond what their money would go to, so they would have to be content with the vesper service, which was cheaper; and he had accordingly sent Christophe to the Pompes Funèbres with instructions to that effect.

Just as Eugène finished reading this scrawl of Bianchon's, he caught sight of something in Madame Vauquer's hands. It was the little circular gold locket containing the hair of the dead man's two daughters.

"How dared you to take that!" he said to the landlady.

"Good Lord!" said Sylvie, "has *that* got to be buried along with him? It's gold."

"Most assuredly it has!" answered Eugène, indignantly. "He shall at least take with him into the grave the one thing which can still in some way represent his daughters."

When the hearse arrived, Eugène had the coffin taken into the house again, and made them unscrew the lid. It was with the sense of performing a religious office that he laid upon the old man's breast that token which had been so closely linked with his memories of the time when Delphine and Anastasie were young and virginally pure in nature, and when they "did not think things out," as he had expressed it in his bitter cry in the passage of death. Rastignac and Christophe, with the two

undertaker's men, were the only followers of the hearse which carried the body to the Church of Saint-Etienne du Mont, at no great distance from the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève. When they arrived there, the coffin was taken out, and deposited in a low-roofed, dark little chapel, round which the student's eyes wandered in the hope of seeing Père Goriot's two daughters or their husbands. But in vain. He had no fellow-mourner except Christophe; who considered himself under an obligation to pay these last respects to a man who had put him in the way of getting many a good tip. While they waited for the two priests, the chorister, and the beadle, to come, Rastignac pressed Christophe's hand. To speak a word was beyond his power.

"Yes, Monsieur Eugène," said Christophe, "he was a good and worthy man, who never spoke one word louder than another; one that gave nobody any trouble, and never did any harm in his life."

The two priests, the chorister, and the beadle came; and having come, they vouchsafed to give such ministrations as you may fairly look to get in exchange for seventy francs in an age when Religion is not so rich that she can afford to give prayers away. Those cleric folk chanted a psalm, the *Libera Nos* and the *De Profundis*. The service lasted twenty minutes in all. There was but one mourning coach for one of the priests and the chorister, who consented to give places in their carriage to Eugène and Christophe.

"There's no one going to follow on," said the priest, "so we may as well get along quickly, and not be behind time at the graveyard. It's half-past five now."

However, just as the coffin was replaced in the hearse, two carriages, with armorial bearings but empty within, came into view, and followed in procession as far as Père-Lachaise. They were the carriages of the Comte de Restaud and the Baron de Nucingen. At six o'clock Père Goriot's body was lowered into the grave, his daughter's servants standing around—only to disappear at once, along with the cleric, as soon as the short prayer was pronounced which had been purchased for the old man's soul by the student's money. The two grave-diggers threw in a few spadefuls of earth, just enough to cover the coffin lid; then they both stopped, and one of them turned to Rastignac and asked him for their gratuity. Eugène searched his pockets; but they were empty, and he had no choice but to borrow twenty sous from Christophe. It was a trifling enough occurrence this, in itself, but it had the effect of plunging Eugène into a state of frightful wretchedness and depression. The day was nearly closed, the damps of the dusk played upon his nerves and fretted his sensibility; and as he gazed into the open grave, tears fell fast from his eyes, and were buried there. And they were the last tears of the youth of Rastignac—those tears of youth which are ever drawn from pure, unselfish hearts by emotions that are almost divine in their nature—those tears of pity and sorrow which, wheresoever they may fall on earth, change to a gush of light that shoots to Heaven. He folded his arms and looked up at the clouded sky: and Christophe, observing his mood, slipped away.

Rastignac, left thus alone, walked a few paces towards the topmost part of the cemetery. Thence looking down he saw Paris, tortuously

couched along the two banks of the Seine; and the lights of the city were waking one by one. His eyes sought out the space between the column of the Place Vendôme and the cupola of the Invalides; and rested upon it with a kind of hunger. There—it was *there* that that splendid world lay which he had longed to enter into. He threw towards that murmuring hive of sweetness such a look, as though he had already the taste of its honey in his mouth, and uttered these proud and swelling words:—

"Henceforth it is a war between us two!"

And, as a first proof and reinforcement of the challenge which he thus hurled at Society, Rastignac went off to dine with Madame de Nucingen.

Saché, September, 1834.

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